

CHAPTER 5

DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

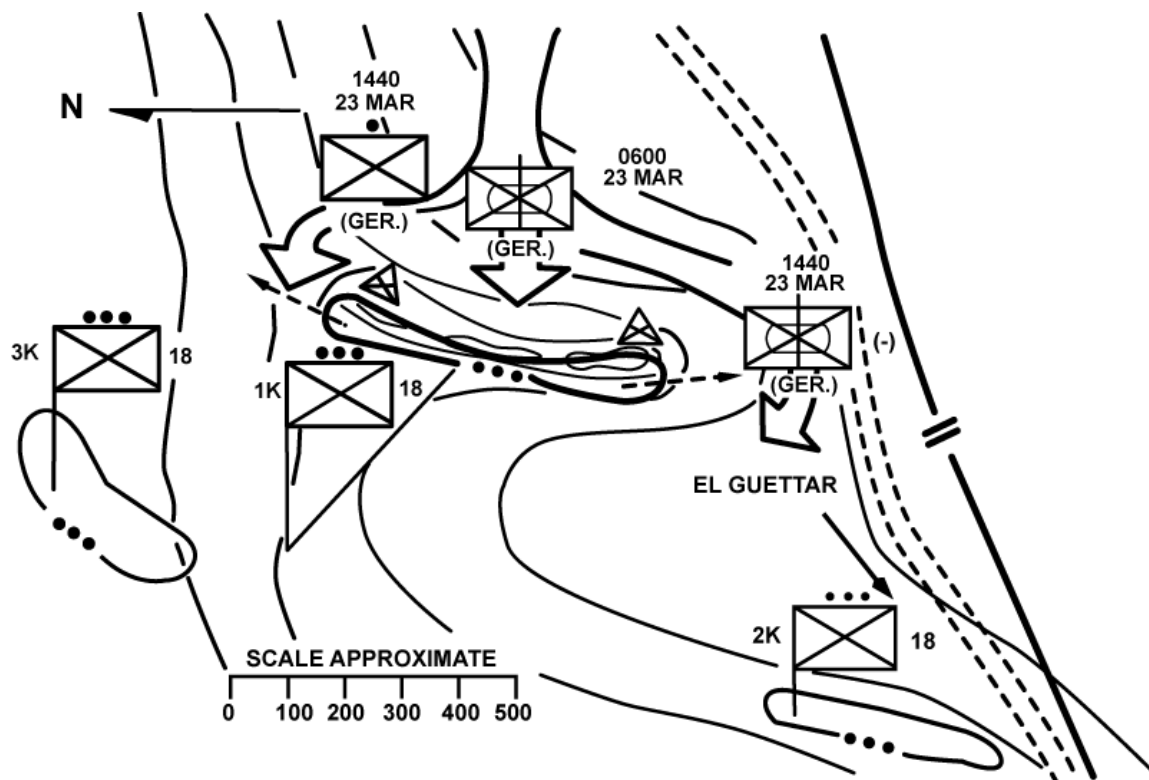
Periods in which the defender can develop superior combat power will be brief, so concentration will have to be rapid and violent. Commanders will have to accept risks in some areas to concentrate for decisive action elsewhere.

FM 100-5, 1986

This chapter describes the planning, preparation, and execution of defensive operations. Defensive operations are temporary measures conducted to identify or create enemy weaknesses that allow the opportunity to go on the offense. Properly conducted, defensive operations can defeat numerically superior forces. Infantry forces in the defense must use the terrain to support their maneuver and to achieve surprise. They maintain an offensive focus and seek to avoid static defenses that surrender the initiative to the enemy. An excellent example of this type of defense occurred in North Africa during World War II.

In March of 1943, Company K, 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry was defending in the hills to the east of El Guettar. Company K was the right flank company for the battalion and was controlling the main road through this sector. Company K had its 1st platoon forward in the center and 2d and 3d platoons to the left and right rear respectively. 1st platoon was in a reverse slope defense on a ridgeline running down towards the road. The 2d and 3d platoons were located on the counterslope to the rear. There was a wadi or ditch on the reverse slope about 15 meters below and parallel to the crest.

The platoon prepared positions in this wadi with light machine guns and grenadiers on each flank and the squad BARs covering the entire crest. A two-man LP was established 500 meters forward of the company. Once it got dark, the 1st platoon moved forward to the exposed forward slope and prepared fighting positions there. By midnight, the company defensive position was prepared. At 0600 hours, an enemy tank column was heard approaching the company position. The CO passed the word to hold their fires. The tanks, without supporting infantry, were allowed to pass down the road and to the rear.



Company K's reverse slope defense.

At 0630, the LP reported a line of half-tracks 700 meters to the front. As they advanced, artillery began to fall on the 1st platoon's forward slope positions. The platoon immediately withdrew to its reverse slope position. They could hear the half-tracks attempting to climb the forward slope and then there was silence. A few minutes later an enemy officer and his runner peered over the crest; as he waved his men forward, the platoon opened fire. Their fire was so effective that no enemy soldiers were able to advance the 15 meters to the wadi. Three more assaults were attempted over the crest in the next hour, each was unsuccessful.

At 1440 hours, the enemy attempted a double envelopment with a dismounted attack around the left flank and a mounted attack around the right flank. But the machine guns and grenadiers on each flank had excellent fields of fire and stopped both attacks. By 1700 the enemy was forced to withdraw leaving behind 500 dead/wounded and five destroyed half-tracks. The friendly casualties totaled 1 dead and 7 wounded.

The CO of Company K understood the importance of using the terrain to protect an infantry force. When infantry must retain ground and fight from static positions, the preparation of the position is critical. The positioning and employment of the key weapons is also critical to success in the defense. The defense must be organized to defeat the enemy's most likely COA and also have the flexibility to adjust to likely contingencies. Finally, the success of every defense normally requires a violent concentration of fires. As in this vignette, these fires are most effective when delivered with surprise from undetected, well-prepared positions.

Section I. DEFENSIVE FUNDAMENTALS

Defensive techniques are integrated into almost all operations, and they are used to accomplish a variety of tasks, such as resupply during offensive operations. In addition to the primary purpose of defeating the enemy's attack, patrol bases and assembly areas are temporary defensive positions used to provide security even during offensive operations.

5-1. PURPOSE

The purpose of defense operations is to cause the enemy attack to fail and to create conditions favorable to assuming the offensive. The commander's concept for the defense determines which control measures and techniques are used.

a. Conducting the defense does not simply entail killing enemy soldiers and destroying equipment faster than the enemy can replace them. The enemy's plan, the cohesion and synchronization of his forces, his morale, and his ability to see the battlefield must be destroyed. Companies conduct defensive operations—

- To defeat an enemy attack.
- To gain time to prepare for other operations.
- To allow a higher commander to concentrate forces elsewhere.
- To control key enemy forces as a prelude to offensive operations.
- To retain key or decisive terrain.

b. The infantry rifle company is organized, equipped, and supported to conduct dynamic, nonlinear defensive operations. (This varies depending on the type of division; but, it is generally true for all infantry companies.) When required to conduct a more static, linear style defense, the CO must limit the vulnerability of his force.

(1) The lethality of the modern battlefield is such that any unit located can be quickly destroyed. This threat is reduced by the proper preparation of survivability positions, but this requires a great deal of time and resources.

(2) Anytime the commander's concept requires the infantry company, or part of it, to fight from static positions, he must consider two things—How likely is it for the enemy to locate these positions and if located, what is the enemy's capability to apply combat power against my positions?

5-2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEFENSE

The characteristics of the defense should be considered when planning or conducting company defensive operations. They are discussed in detail in FM 100-5. The considerations as they apply to the infantry company are:

a. **Preparation.** The defender arrives in the battle area before the attacker. He must take advantage of this by making the most thorough preparations for combat that time allows. By analyzing the factors of METT-T, the CO gains an understanding of the tactical situation and identifies potential friendly and enemy weaknesses. He then war-games friendly and enemy options and synchronizes his concept of the operation with all available combat multipliers. Since the enemy decides the time and place of the attack, all-round security is posted to provide early warning. The company's reconnaissance and security operations must begin immediately upon transitioning to the defense and continue throughout the operation.

b. **Disruption.** Defensive plans vary with the circumstances, but all defensive concepts of operation aim at disrupting the attacker's synchronization. Counterattacks,

indirect fires, obstacles, and retention of key or decisive terrain prevents the enemy from concentrating his strength against portions of the defense. Destroying enemy command and control vehicles disrupts enemy synchronization and flexibility. Deception measures further disrupt the enemy's attack.

c. **Concentration.** The defender must concentrate combat power at the decisive time and place if he is to succeed. He must obtain a local advantage at points of decision. Offensive action and the use of surprise and deception are often the means of gaining this advantage. The defender must remember that this concentration refers to combat power—not just soldiers. Combat power focuses on effects—not just numbers of soldiers/weapon systems. To do so, the defender normally must economize in some areas, retain a reserve, and maneuver to gain local superiority. Local counterattacks may be needed to maintain the integrity of the defense. Indirect fire can be shifted to critical points to rapidly concentrate destructive effects.

d. **Flexibility.** Flexibility is derived from sound preparation and effective C2. The defender must be agile enough to counter or avoid the attacker's blow and then strike back effectively. Flexibility results from a detailed estimate, an understanding of the unit's purpose, aggressive R&S, and, when applicable, organization in depth and retention or reconstitution of a reserve. Flexibility requires that the commander "see the battlefield"—both physically and through timely and accurate reports. Supplementary positions on secondary avenues of approach provide more flexibility to the commander. After a good analysis of the terrain and enemy, reserves can be positioned to allow the commander to react to unexpected events.

5-3. DEFENSIVE FRAMEWORK

Divisions and larger units have two broad patterns of defense: mobile and area. A mobile defense is mainly oriented on enemy destruction; an area defense is oriented on retaining terrain (FM 7-20). Both types have static and maneuver elements, and both follow the defensive framework. Figure 5-1 shows the five complementary elements of the framework: deep, reconnaissance and security, defensive, rear, and reserve operations.

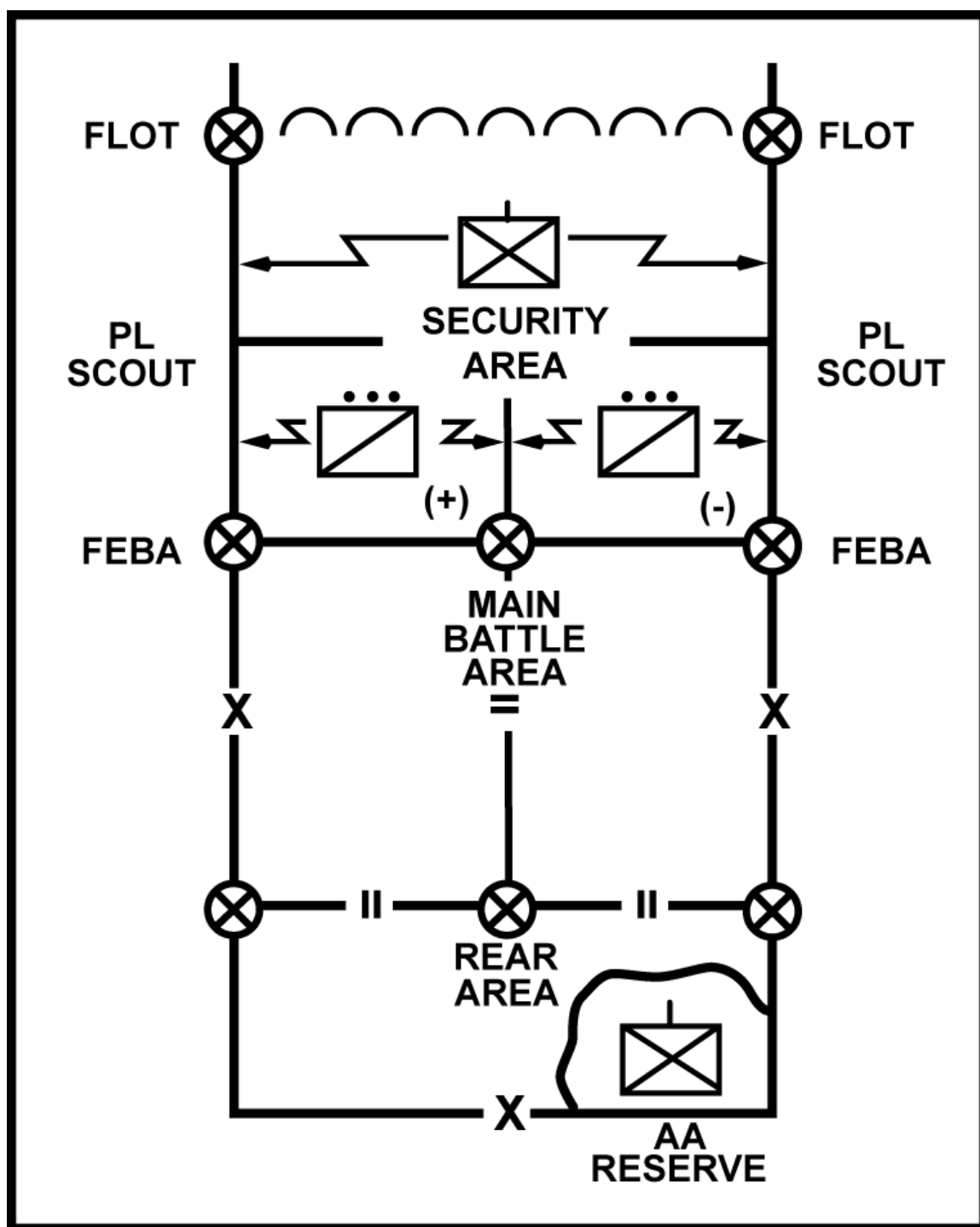


Figure 5-1. Defensive framework at brigade level.

a. Infantry companies normally conduct defensive operations as part of a larger element. The company may operate in the security area, main battle area, or the rear area, depending on the assigned missions. The company may take part in deep and rear operations as part of a larger force. At company level, the company's defensive framework normally focuses on reconnaissance and security actions, defensive operations, and actions by the reserve. At times, the company may fight a more

decentralized defense that requires them to provide forces for each of the elements of the framework.

(1) The rifle company normally defends as part of a battalion to disrupt or destroy the enemy, to protect a friendly force, or to control terrain. The orientation of the company defense is determined from the mission analysis. Normally, the company's purpose in the mission statement will clearly focus the company towards the enemy, the terrain, or a friendly force.

(2) A simple, complete concept of the operation is the basis of all defenses. The rifle company routinely uses attacks, raids, ambushes, and other offensive techniques in the conduct of defensive operations. At brigade level and below, defenses normally consist of three complementary elements:

(a) Security operations forward of and to the flanks of the MBA. These operations consist of security, reconnaissance, and counterreconnaissance tasks. Depending on the specific missions assigned, the company may simply observe and report, engage with indirect fires, and or engage with direct-fire weapons. Security operations are crucial throughout the defense—initially, to support the preparation of the defense; early in the fight, to disrupt the enemy attack and or to identify his main effort; and in the main battle area, to support the commander's decision-making process.

(b) Defensive operations conducted in the MBA oriented on enemy destruction, terrain retention, or force protection. Normally, the decisive fight occurs in the main battle area; therefore, the main effort is located there. Units tasked with security missions or reserve missions must support the main effort in the commander's concept for conducting the defense.

(c) Reserves that allow the commander to seize and maintain the initiative and preserve his flexibility. Although the reserve does not have an assigned mission that directly supports the main effort, the CO attempts to employ the reserve at the decisive time and place to ensure the success of the defense.

b. A company may perform all of these operations at the same time in its own sector; or, it may be tasked to do one or more of them for a larger unit. An example of the former is a company assigned its own defensive sector during low-intensity combat. For security, the CO may have a combination of OPs and R&S patrols. Within his MBA, the CO may consider larger ambushes and more positional defenses. For a reserve, he may position a force at a location that allows the most flexibility. As a portion of a larger force, the company may be tasked to serve as the brigade reserve.

Section II. PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

Upon receipt of a battalion defense warning order, the CO starts his troop-leading procedures (Chapter 2) and makes an estimate of the situation. The result of this estimate is a concept that includes control measures, the fire plan, an R&S plan, a logistics plan, and a plan for the employment of a reserve (if required).

5-4. DEFENSIVE CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in Chapter 2, the restated mission statement and the other critical facts and deductions provide the focus for developing the defensive concept. Each COA should be developed starting at a potential decisive point. Once the CO has identified his potential decisive point(s), he develops his concept using the following process.

a. Determine decisive points and times to focus combat power.

(1) The battalion commander's concept and taskings for the company may focus the company on a very specific decisive point and time. This is most likely when the company is the battalion main effort. For example, the company may be tasked to conduct the central ambush as part of the battalion area ambush. In this case, the company decisive point will be somewhere in the assigned kill zone, and the CO's concept will seek to generate maximum combat power there to accomplish his mission.

(2) In another situation, the decisive point may be less obvious and the techniques for generating combat power much more difficult than arraying units and weapons around a kill zone or engagement area. This may be the case when the company is a supporting effort for the battalion or when the battalion concept is much more decentralized. For example, the company may be defending in sector with a mission to guard the right flank of the battalion main effort to prevent the enemy from enveloping the main effort.

b. Determine the results that must be achieved at the decisive point to accomplish the mission. Normally, the purpose from the company mission statement clearly states the desired results. At times, particularly during decentralized operations, the CO must analyze the situation more closely to determine the desired results.

c. Determine the purposes to be achieved by the main and supporting efforts. (The supporting purposes must be clearly linked to the main effort's assigned purpose).

(1) The main effort's purpose is often the purpose from the company's mission statement. At times the company purpose must be modified slightly to be appropriate for the main effort platoon. When modified, it must be clear that by achieving the main effort's purpose the company will achieve its purpose.

(2) The supporting purposes are selected by determining what must be achieved to support the success of the main effort. Examples of supporting effort purposes include; to prevent the envelopment of the main effort, to force the enemy into an engagement area, to prevent enemy reconnaissance and identify the enemy's main attack, to deceive the enemy of the main defense locations, or to allow the main effort to maneuver against the enemy.

(3) The CO uses the framework of the defense to assist him in developing his concept. Although the focus is on the decisive fight in the main battle area, security requirements and the need for a reserve must also be addressed.

d. Determine the essential tasks for subordinate units (main and supporting efforts) that achieve these purposes.

(1) The task should clearly focus the subordinate unit on the terrain, the enemy, or a friendly unit. When linked with the purpose, a clearly defined, attainable, and decisive mission statement is assigned.

(2) The CO also considers how to achieve mutual support. It is achieved by designating a main effort and by assigning supporting effort missions that support this unit. It is increased by positioning units where they can provide security and or the ability to fire/maneuver in support of each other.

(3) Often, during decentralized defensive operations, mutual support between platoons/sections depends solely on the leaders' understanding of the CO's concept and their relationship to the main effort. The success of the defense may be determined by the initiative and aggressiveness of the supporting platoon's leadership.

e. Task—organize units (platoons and sections) to accomplish the identified missions.

(1) The CO allocates resources to the main effort first and then to the supporting efforts. Normally, the CO will not task—organize below squad level or specific weapons or equipment. At times, particularly when under strength, the CO may have to.

(2) The size of these organizations may range from a squad(-) to a platoon(+). If there are insufficient resources to ensure each of the supporting effort missions is attainable, the task may be modified. For example, the original mission may have been to guard the flank of the main effort to prevent his envelopment; it may now be changed to a screen task. If required, the purpose may also be changed. In this case it might be changed to provide early warning and prevent surprise of the main effort. Or if the original task was to block, a delay task (block enemy movement south of PL Red for two hours) may be attainable and still achieve the desired results.

f. Assign command and control headquarters for each of the task organized units.

(1) All platoon/section headquarters should be fully used. If additional leaders are required, use the XO, 1SG, company FSO, and other company leaders.

(2) In some cases, when no senior leader is available, the senior squad leader may be the unit leader. Or if the company has a one-squad reserve, it is probably led by its assigned squad leader.

g. Complete a generic task organization by assigning all organic or attached units. Of particular concern may be the FOs, medics, and other attachments. They should be attached to the unit that can best employ them or possibly where they provide the most flexibility.

h. Establish control measures that clarify and support the accomplishment of the assigned mission.

(1) Time events and use control measures (axis, sectors, BPs, engagement areas, DOA, assault positions, objectives. . .) to synchronize subordinate actions without stifling initiative.

(2) Certain control measures may be required to provide additional safety for the unit. These may include fire control measures, procedures, or special signals or markings to ensure understanding.

(3) At times, both a sector and a battle position may be an effective control measure to support the mission and to allocate terrain. Paragraph 5-5 discusses battle positions and sectors in detail.

i. The essential part of the concept, dealing with the actions at the decisive point, has been completed. The focus of this phase in the concept development is to ensure the main effort is weighted. The CO can weight the main effort in many different ways. Some examples include:

- Attaching additional squads/weapons.
- Assigning priority of fires or allocating an FPF or priority target.
- Assigning priority of any CS/CSS support.
- Limiting the main effort's area of responsibility to allow the unit to focus on the critical action. For example, assigning a smaller sector.
- By locating other resources in the vicinity of the main effort that support the main effort's focus on the decisive action.
- By providing additional time to prepare, rehearse, or conduct reconnaissance.

The plan is now completed by—

- Including the occupation plan for the defense.

- Completing the fires planning (both direct and indirect).
- Positioning other assets (such as the CP, mortars, or the company trains) and assigning them missions.
- Developing the CSS plan for resupply, casualty evacuation, and movement of rucksacks/other equipment.
- Planning for likely contingencies (such as a be-prepared mission for one unit to become the company reserve if the initial reserve is committed).

5-5. SECTORS AND BATTLE POSITIONS

The CO's estimate will determine the most effective control measures for every operation. There is no set criteria for selecting the control measures, but Figure 5-2 provides some basic considerations.

a. A sector is the control measure that provides the most freedom of action to a platoon. It provides flexibility to allow the platoon to operate in a decentralized manner while still ensuring sufficient control exists to prevent confusion and to synchronize the company's operation. In the close terrain that the infantry prefers to operate in, it is often difficult to achieve mutual support between platoon battle positions. It is also very difficult for the CO to see and control the fight throughout the company sector. For these reasons the infantry routinely operates in sectors.

BATTLE POSITION		SECTOR	
WELL-DEFENDED; ENEMY CAN BE CANALIZED	← AVENUES OF APPROACH →	NOT EASILY DEFINED	
DOMINATES AVENUES OF APPROACH	← TERRAIN →	DOMINATING TERRAIN NOT AVAILABLE	
NARROW/ SMALL	← UNIT AREA OF OPERATIONS →	WIDE/ LARGE	
ACHIEVABLE	← MUTUAL SUPPORT →	CANNOT EASILY BE ACHIEVED	
GOOD	← COMMANDERS ABILITY TO SEE/CONTROL →	DEGRADED	
RETAIN BLOCK	← ASSIGNED TASK →	DISRUPT CONTAIN	

Figure 5-2. Selecting control measures.

b. A battle position is a general location and orientation of forces on the ground from which units defend. The platoon is located within the general area of the BP. Security elements may be located forward and to the flanks of the BP. Platoons defending a BP may not be tied in with adjacent units; in which case, the requirement for all-round security is increased. The use of on-order BPs with the tasks of "prepare" or "recon" provides flexibility and depth to the defensive plan.

(1) If assigning BPs, the CO assigns the platoon a primary position to defend and a sector of fire. Each position must contribute to the company's accomplishment of the assigned task and purpose within the battalion commander's concept of the operation.

(2) A CO can also assign alternate/supplementary positions to platoons, depending on the situation. An alternate position is a position to the front, flank, or slightly to the rear of the primary position (Figure 5-3). It must let the platoon cover the same sector of fire as the primary position. If it is to be occupied during limited visibility, it may be forward of the primary position. The alternate position may be occupied if the platoon is driven out of the primary position by enemy fire or by assault. Or, it may be occupied to begin the fight to deceive the enemy of the platoon's primary position.

(3) A supplementary position is to the flank or the rear of the primary position. It allows the platoon to defend against an attack on an avenue of approach not covered by the primary position (Figure 5-4). It can be assigned when the platoon must cover more than one avenue of approach. A platoon moves from its primary, alternate, or supplementary position only with the CO's approval, or when a condition exists that he has prescribed as a reason to move.

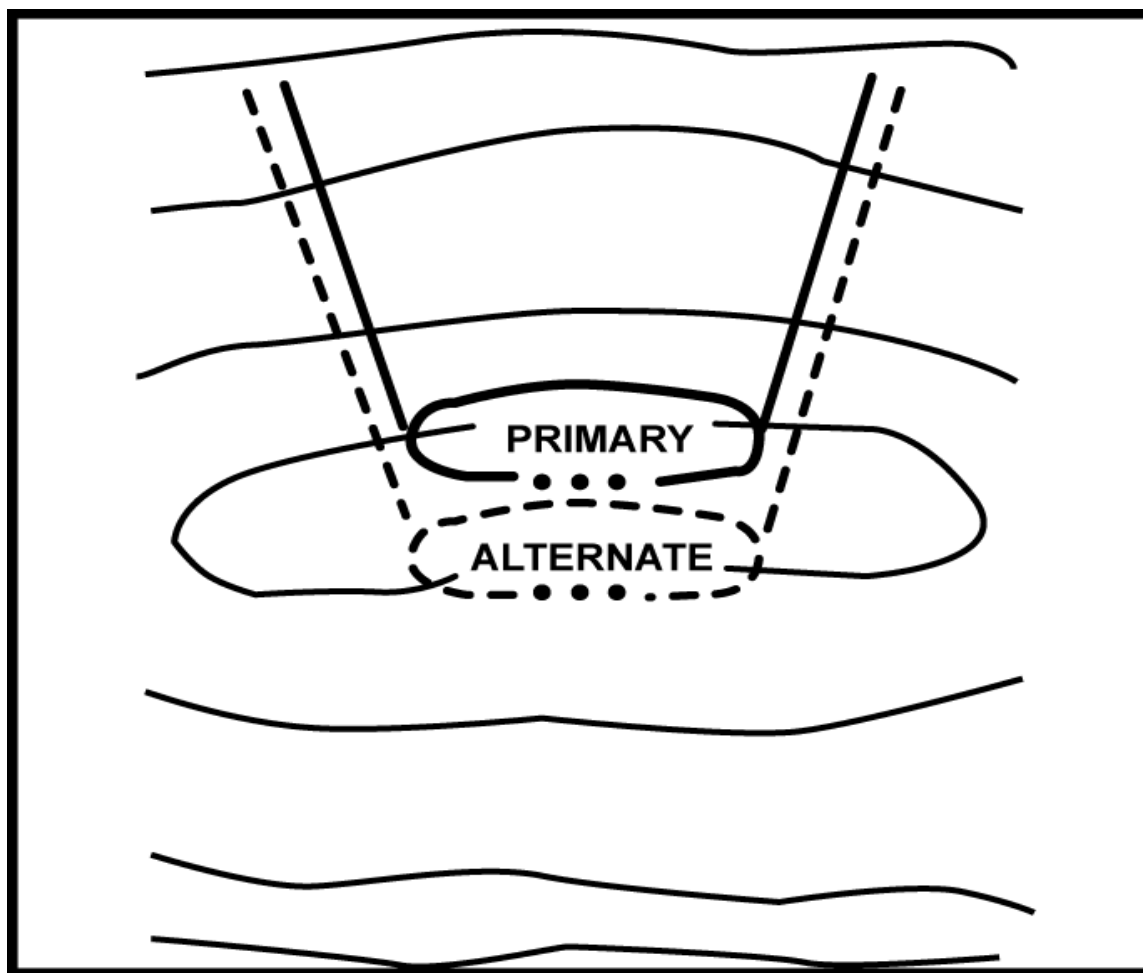


Figure 5-3. Alternate position.

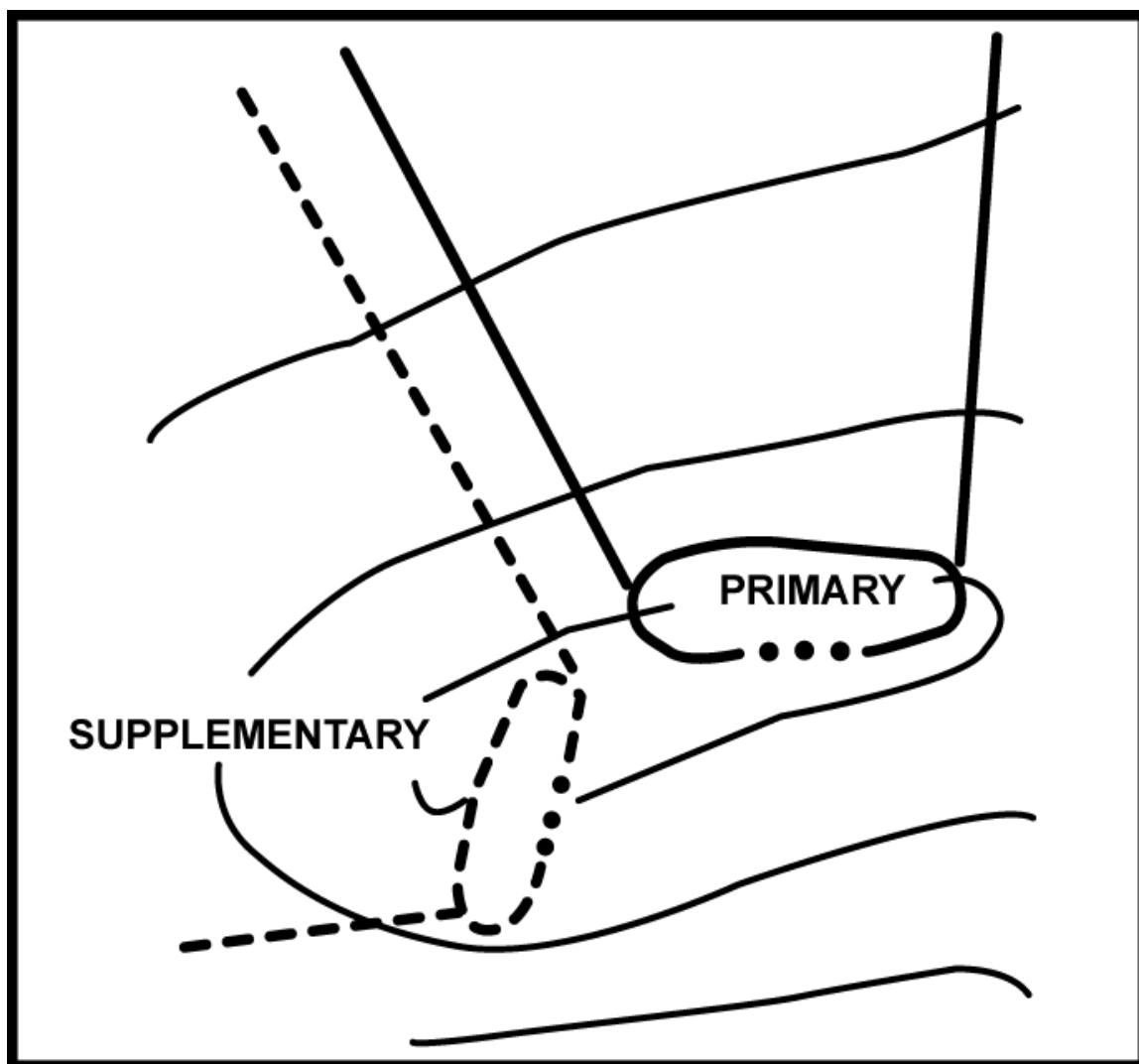


Figure 5-4. Supplementary position.

c. Based on his estimate and the factors stated in Figure 5-2, the CO can decide to assign platoon sectors. A defensive sector is an area designated by boundaries that define where a unit operates and the terrain for which it is responsible. Sectors are normally deeper than they are wide to allow the platoon to fight the battle in depth.

d. In some situations, a platoon may receive both a battle position and a sector to provide the proper control based on the commander's concept. An example is when a platoon is initially tasked to delay or interdict enemy forces moving through an area to disrupt their attack. A sector may be the most effective control measure to allow decentralized operations and increase the subordinate's freedom of action. If this same platoon has a subsequent mission to block enemy movement through a choke point to allow the remainder of the company to counterattack critical parts of the enemy's flanks, a BP may now be the proper control measure. A BP orients this platoon on the choke point and would allow indirect fires to be employed with fewer restrictions.

(1) In this example, only one control measure would be in effect for the platoon at a time. This is depicted graphically by using a dashed line for the battle position graphic. In

a different situation, the commander's concept may require both control measures to be in effect at the same time.

(2) The use of multiple control measures (Figure 5-5) is not routine. The CO must ensure that he is not overtasking the platoon. He must also ensure that his concept and the purpose for each control measure are clear to all of his subordinates. There is a significant risk of confusion unless the concept is effective and articulated well during the OPORD. A briefback is essential.

e. Regardless of the control measure assigned by the CO, each platoon leader prepares and provides the CO with a platoon sector sketch. (See FM 7-8.) These sketches help the CO determine whether or not the company AO is well covered. From the platoon sector sketches, the CO develops his company sector sketch. These sketches do not, however, reduce the need for him to physically inspect his company's defense.

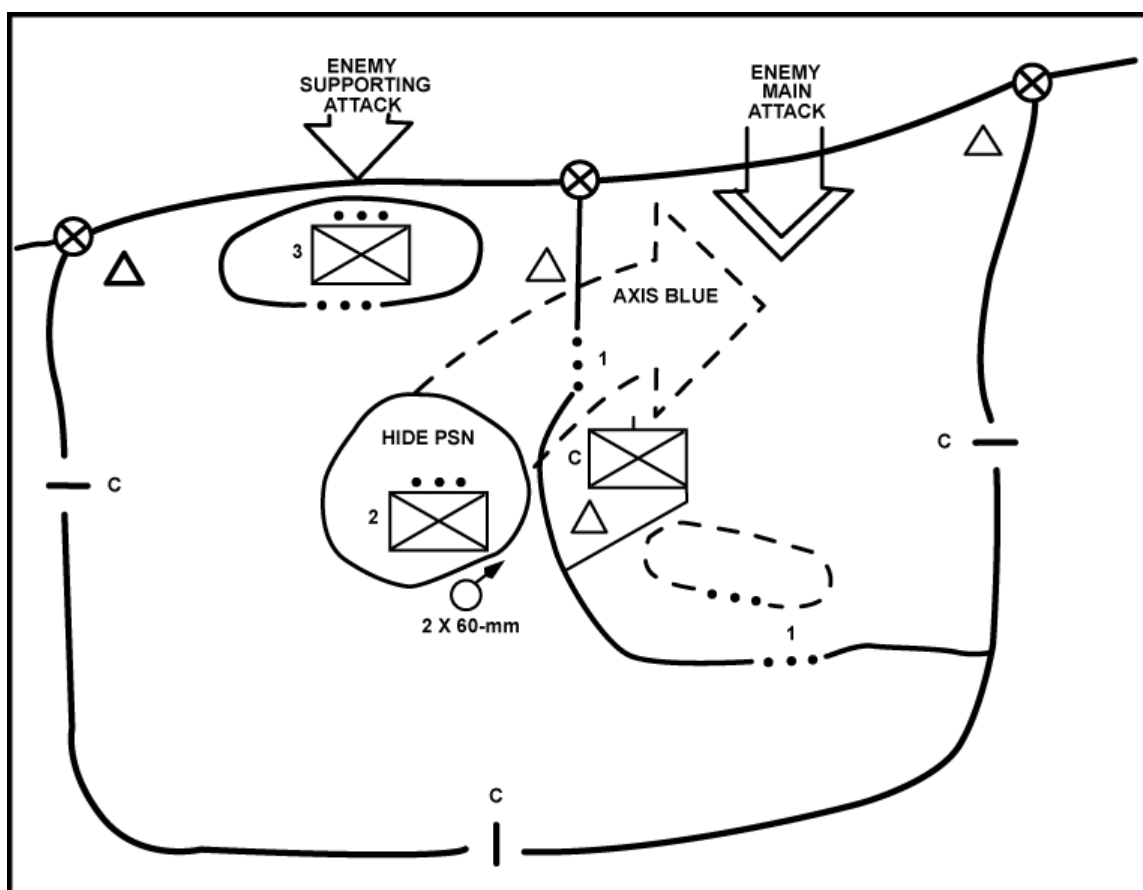


Figure 5-5. Use of multiple control measures.

5-6. COMPANY FIRE PLAN

The company fire plan has two parts—direct and indirect. It must fully integrate the effects of all weapon systems, the company obstacle plan, and the company scheme of maneuver to achieve the greatest effect on the enemy force. The amount of company fire planning will vary depending upon the situation and the CO's concept. When the company concept is more centralized, such as when arrayed around a large engagement area, the company fire plan may be very detailed. When fighting a more decentralized defense, such as a company area ambush with platoons in dispersed sectors, the company fire plan may only address minimal information. A detailed example for developing a company fire plan is in Appendix J. Although this example is focused on employing antiarmor weapons, the process is essentially the same for the company's small arms.

a. **Direct Fires.** The CO begins his direct-fire planning by ensuring that he understands and complies with the battalion fire plan. The extent of his planning depends on how much time is available and what fire planning/control measures are required—

- To synchronize the company battle.
- To maximize the effect of the weapons on the enemy.
- To achieve mutual support.
- To provide coverage of assigned areas of responsibility.
- To ensure the soldiers' safety from friendly fires.

(1) *Control measures.* The CO uses control measures to support the company fire plan. The definitions and graphics for these control measures are found in FM 101-5-1 and Appendix J of this manual.

(a) Sectors of fire. These may be assigned to a unit or to a specific weapon system. A primary and a secondary sector of fire may be assigned to provide flexibility or as part of a contingency mission.

(b) Engagement areas. EAs or kill zones are normally located along an avenue of approach and are used to mass fires of one or more units to destroy the enemy within these areas.

NOTE: Engagement areas and sectors of fire are not intended to restrict fires or cause operations to become static or fixed; they are used only as tools to concentrate fires and to optimize their effects.

(c) Target reference points. TRPs are versatile fire control measures. They can be used to identify the limits of a sector of fire and they can also be used to concentrate fires into a very precise area. When properly planned and marked, they can be used to rapidly shift fires during the battle.

(d) Trigger lines/points. These are used to synchronize the fires of the company and to prevent engaging enemy beyond the maximum range of the weapon.

(e) Engagement priorities. These are assigned to specific units/weapons to provide guidance on what targets to engage when multiple targets are available.

(f) Other control measures. At times, particularly in LIC or MOUT operations, specific weapons may have certain restrictions on their use. These may include limits on area coverage weapons when the chance of civilian casualties is too high or limits on the use of machine guns and grenades when clearing framed buildings.

(2) *Small arms.* Small arms include all the rifles, machine guns, and pistols organic to an infantry company. The company fire plan normally assigns control measures to the units and allows the unit leaders to control the fires of individual weapons.

(3) *Special weapons/munitions.* The company fire plan may also address special weapons such as LAWs, AT4s, sniper rifles, M202 (Flash), Claymores, hand grenades, demolitions, or other special purpose weapons/munitions. Snipers will normally remain under company control and receive their detailed fire control measures from the CO. The other special weapons/munitions are normally employed by the soldiers in the squads and platoons and are controlled by their leaders.

(4) *Antiarmor weapons.* An engagement priority may be assigned to each weapon or type of weapon. For example, Dragons will engage BMPs, C2 vehicles, and ADA vehicles. TOWs will engage tanks, BMPs, and engineer breaching vehicles. For a detailed discussion of antiarmor fundamentals and employment considerations, see Appendix J and FM 7-91.

(a) Dragons or 90-mm recoilless rifles. The CO normally assigns positions and sectors of fire or EAs to Dragons and 90-mm recoilless rifles. However, he may direct the general position and sectors of fire or EAs of weapons covering key areas and allow the platoon leader to select the exact locations. He may, for example, order a platoon leader to position his antiarmor weapons on the flank of his position. This allows the platoon leader to tie in with the attached or supporting TOWs or those of an adjacent unit, ensuring an area is covered. Regardless of who assigns the positions and sectors of fire, the CO checks and adjusts weapon positions to ensure there are no gaps and to see that units and weapons have mutual support. The CO also does this with machine guns. The Dragon's nightsight should be integrated into the company's R&S plan. Under certain conditions (at twilight or with artificial illumination), both the daysight and the nightsight for the Dragon may be used at the same time.

(b) Tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided missiles. TOWs are normally employed by section (two TOWs). The CO or weapons platoon leader assigns them positions. He also assigns their primary and secondary sectors of fire or EAs. When possible, at least a 300-meter separation should exist between TOWs so that no two weapons can be suppressed by the same enemy indirect fire. Positions should allow for mutual support between TOWs, and between TOWs and other antiarmor weapons. Some security is gained for TOWs by having them positioned near infantry units. The TOW sights (day and night) are excellent for observation and should be integrated into the company R&S plan. Some TOWs may be positioned temporarily near or forward of the FEBA to have early, long-range fire at enemy vehicles. As the enemy closes on them, the TOWs move to the rear or on the flanks. If this technique is used, the CO must consider their vulnerability to direct and indirect fires and the loss of surprise in the main battle area. If one of the battalion TOW sections are supporting the company, the CO depends on the senior section sergeant for controlling the TOWs. If both sections support the company, the TOW platoon leader controls them.

b. **Indirect Fires.** The CO and company FSO plan indirect-fire targets to support the company scheme of maneuver. A detailed discussion of company indirect-fire planning is in Chapter 7. They plan targets on all likely enemy approaches and on areas the enemy may use in the attack, such as enemy OPs, support positions, avenues of approach, assault positions, and defiles. Targets are also planned in front, on top of, and behind friendly positions to stop likely penetrations or to support a counterattack. It is possible to plot too many targets. Plan targets on prominent terrain and adjust fire from them. During the defense, the company may be supported by the company mortars, the battalion mortars, or any of the artillery units supporting the battalion.

(1) The CO and the company FSO plan the exact locations for any FPF. An FPF is a barrier of fire planned on the most dangerous enemy avenue of approach to provide immediate close protection for defending soldiers during an enemy assault. It must be integrated with the direct-fire plan (particularly any machine gun FPLs) and the company obstacle plan. It is adjusted as close as possible to friendly soldiers without endangering them. Once the FPF is called for by codeword over the radio or by pyrotechnic signal, it is fired continuously until the CO orders it stopped or the firing unit is out of ammunition. The company has an FPF from its mortar section and may have FPFs from the battalion mortars or supporting artillery.

(2) A target list of indirect fire targets planned by the CO and company FSO is sent to the battalion FSO. The battalion FSO consolidates and coordinates the company fire plans and returns the consolidated list to the CO or company FSO. The target list is then distributed to the platoon leaders and their FOs. This is bottom-up fire planning. For a discussion of top-down fire planning, see FM 7-20.

(3) The company mortar section is positioned where it can place fires on its assigned targets (Appendix E). It should be far enough to the rear so the mortar's minimum range does not prevent hitting targets within the company sector or BP. This allows mortars to help stop an enemy that has penetrated the defense or to help support a counterattack. A rule of thumb for positioning mortars is to have one-half to two-thirds of their range forward of the company position. However, the distance at which the company can observe and identify targets must be considered. Firing positions should be in defilade and concealed.

c. **Mines and Obstacles.** Engineers, if available, or the company constructs tactical obstacles to support the commander's concept and maximize the effect of the company's fires. Obstacles are placed to disrupt the enemy formations, force the enemy into EAs with turning obstacles, and hold the enemy in engagement areas with fixing or blocking obstacles.

(1) For best results, obstacles are employed in depth and existing obstacles are reinforced to increase their effectiveness. The company constructs protective obstacles to defeat the enemy's final assault. A certain type of obstacles are oriented against the most severe close combat threat—antipersonnel obstacles against dismounted infantry and antitank obstacles against an armored force. As with tactical obstacles, protective obstacles are sited according to the terrain and covered by fires. During limited visibility, soldiers are repositioned to ensure obstacles are still covered by fire, and are not covertly breached. (See Appendix C and FM 7-20.)

(2) Protective obstacles are usually located beyond hand grenade distance (40 to 100 meters) from the soldier's fighting position. Protective wire (Figure 5-6) may be a

complex obstacle providing all-round protection of a platoon perimeter, or it may be a simple wire obstacle on the likely dismounted AA into a squad ambush position. Protective minefields may be integrated into the protective wire or used separately.

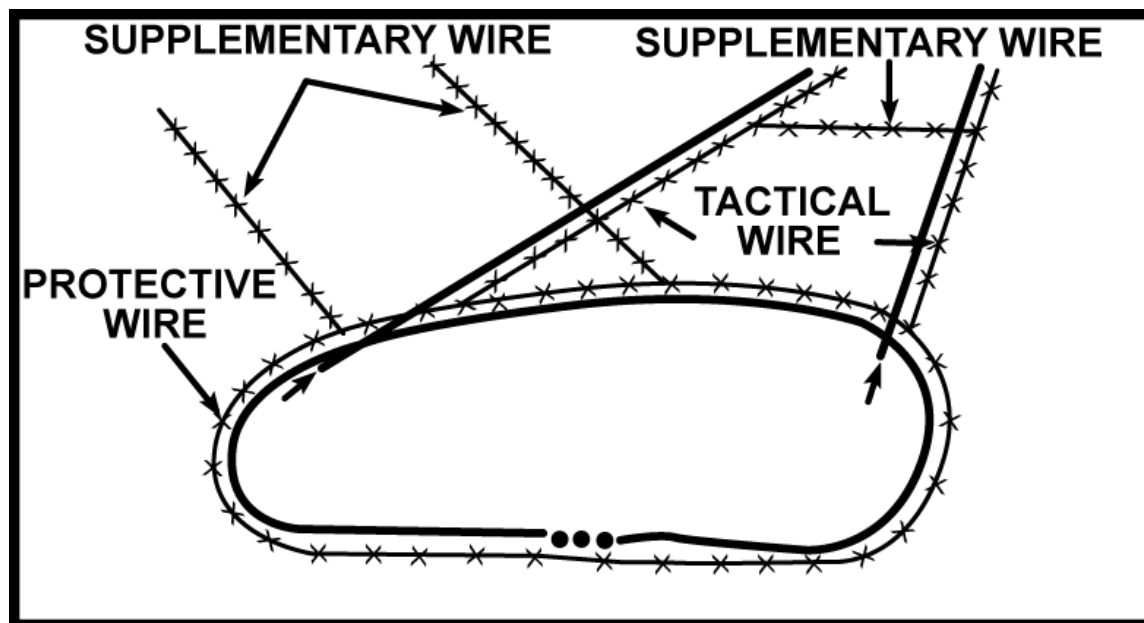


Figure 5-6. Wire obstacles.

(3) Tactical obstacles are positioned to increase the effectiveness of the company's fires. Tactical wire is usually positioned along the friendly side of the machine gun FPLs. Tactical minefields may also be integrated into these wire obstacles or used separately.

(4) Supplementary wire obstacles are used to break up the line of tactical wire to prevent the enemy from locating friendly weapons (particularly the machine guns) by following the tactical wire.

(5) When planning obstacles, the CO should consider the amount of time required to prepare them, the burden on the logistical system, the soldiers' loads, and the risk of the enemy detecting the obstacles and the resulting loss of surprise.

5-7. SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

The company may receive taskings as part of the battalion security plan. There will also be additional security taskings resulting from the CO's concept for the company defense. These taskings may be oriented on friendly units (screen, guard, or secure), on the enemy/terrain (reconnaissance), or on the enemy's reconnaissance assets (counterreconnaissance). The CO establishes a security plan to keep the enemy from observing or surprising the company. This security is established before moving the company into the area and is continuously maintained. He bases this plan on tasks received from the battalion, on the enemy situation, the terrain, and on the visibility conditions. The plan provides active and passive measures and counterreconnaissance.

a. **Active Measures.** These include OPs, stand-tos, and patrols. The CO can require each platoon to have a set number of OPs. If not, the platoon leaders decide what they need; there should be at least one OP for each platoon. In close terrain or during limited visibility, there may be one for each squad.

(1) The CO can also require a set number of men to be on security at all times. The number varies with the enemy situation, terrain, visibility and the unit's need for rest. As a guide, at least one-third of the soldiers should be on security at all times.

(2) When an attack is expected, the entire company should be on alert; however, this should not be maintained for long periods. The CO must keep in mind that his soldiers need rest to function in future operations. A sleep plan must be established and enforced. Security, however, cannot be sacrificed for rest.

(3) A stand-to is held both morning and evening to ensure that each man adjusts to the changing light and noise conditions, and is dressed, equipped, and ready for action. The stand-to should start before first light in the morning and continue until after light. It should start before dark in the evening and last until after dark. The starting and ending times should vary to prevent establishing a pattern, but the stand-to must last long enough to accomplish its purpose.

(4) The battalion can have its companies dispatch patrols whose missions contribute to battalion security. The CO can dispatch patrols in addition to those required by the battalion to satisfy the security needs. He may have the patrols reconnoiter dead space in the sector, gaps between platoons, gaps between the company and adjacent units, or open flanks. The company reserve may provide these patrols.

(5) Platoons may dispatch similar security patrols. All patrols sent out by the company or its platoons must be coordinated with battalion. (For more information on patrolling, see FM 7-8.)

b. **Passive Measures.** These measures include camouflage, movement control, light and noise discipline, proper radiotelephone procedures, and the use of ground sensors. REMSs can be used to give warning of enemy movement. TOW and Dragon gunners, with their daysights and nightsights, can add to the security effort both day and night. The company should also use its NVDs for surveillance.

(1) To ensure effective coverage, the CO may direct platoons to cover specific areas with specific RSTA devices (NVDs, thermal sights, PEWS). He may also specify how many NVDs will be in use (for example, one-half of the soldiers on security will use a NVD).

(2) Sector sketches should indicate the locations of key RSTA devices to include all thermals (AN/PAS-7, Dragon and TOW nightsights, and PEWS).

c. **Counterreconnaissance.** This operation entails denying enemy reconnaissance elements from gaining accurate information on friendly preparations through destruction of enemy recon or through deception. It is seldom possible to deny all information to the enemy. Based on the expected enemy reconnaissance action, the CO decides what information and locations he must protect. He also considers what information would make the enemy act the way he wants him to (such as, to deploy prematurely, deploy too late, attack a false objective, or move into a kill zone). The CO should determine the priorities for the counterreconnaissance effort and focus his efforts toward denying that information to the enemy.

(1) The company's counterreconnaissance plan is integrated into the concept of the operation and coordinated with the battalion's plan. At times, the company may be the counterreconnaissance force for the battalion. (For more details, see FM 7-20.)

(2) An example of the use of counterreconnaissance is a defense along a river line against a motorized force. The CO determines the importance of denying the enemy

knowledge of the crossing sites along the river. He then focuses his counterreconnaissance effort on the crossing sites. The CO employs ambushes, mines, obstacles, false fighting positions, security patrols, OPs, indirect fires, camouflage, demonstrations, and other measures to destroy or deceive the enemy's reconnaissance elements.

(3) The concept for the defense must address the counterreconnaissance battle. If the battalion order does not provide sufficient detail, the rifle company commander must decide how to defeat the enemy's reconnaissance effort. There are two general approaches to this task.

(a) The first is to identify and destroy all reconnaissance assets before they can reach the company's MBA. This may be very difficult and may reduce the chance of gaining surprise against the enemy's main body. To fight the counterreconnaissance battle in this manner requires—

- Unity of command. All assets / units involved in this effort must be controlled by one leader.
- A well-planned concept. It must include clear taskings, effective task organizations, and detailed fire planning and engineer support. The CSS plan must provide the required maintenance, resupply, and casualty evacuation support.
- A mix of finders and fighters. Certain units are tasked to find the enemy reconnaissance assets. Once located, they report/call for fires. Other units are responsible for destroying these enemy units. They may need to be mobile to cover the entire area.
- A withdrawal plan. The rearward passage or repositioning of the units in the counterreconnaissance force must be planned and coordinated with all units involved. The timing for this event is critical and normally depends upon early identification of the enemy's attack forces to be successful.

(b) The second option is to allow the reconnaissance to move through the area in order to achieve surprise on the enemy main body. This option requires battalion's consent and the maximum use of camouflage and concealment. A variation of this technique would be to allow the enemy's reconnaissance assets to move through the company area and destroy them in the rear. Although the main body may be alerted, they will not have a sound understanding of the defensive scheme.

d. Limited Visibility Security. During limited visibility, the CO must increase security measures to ensure that the company is not surprised by the enemy. He can do this by—

- Increasing the number of OPs and patrols.
- Occupying supplementary positions if they allow better coverage of obstacles and probable limited visibility avenues of approach.
- Employing trip flares and other early warning devices.
- Employing thermal night sights/NVDs.
- Employing platoon early warning systems.
- Adjusting fire control measures.
- Increasing the number of soldiers on security in each position.
- Maintaining noise/light discipline.
- Limiting movement.

(1) At night, the CO may plan for illumination (by artillery, mortars, hand-held flares, and grenade launchers) forward of the company's position to expose an attacking enemy force. If the company has an open flank, the CO plans for illumination there also. However, all plans for the use of illumination must be coordinated with the adjacent units and approved by the battalion.

(2) The CO must not fire illumination or allow his soldiers to initiate direct fire too soon. The enemy may employ small patrols to probe the company's defense to find a weak point or to cause soldiers to reveal their positions by initiating fire. If enemy patrols are detected, units should use grenade launchers, Claymore mines, or indirect fire to engage them. They do not fire direct-fire weapons, particularly crew-served weapons, until the enemy attacks. When the enemy does attack, the CO may call for illumination if the battalion approves it, and the company defends as in daylight.

5-8. EMPLOYMENT OF THE RESERVE

A company may be the battalion or brigade reserve. When a company maintains a reserve, the battalion commander may direct the CO not to commit his reserve without permission. (For a discussion of these situations, see paragraph 5-17 of this chapter or Chapter 4 of FM 7-20.) Discussed herein is the employment of a reserve designated and controlled by the company commander.

a. Even at company level, the CO should strive to retain a reserve—even if it is only a squad. The reserve should be used at the critical point in the battle. It may be used to complete the destruction of the enemy or for other decisive action.

b. The size of the reserve may be as large as a platoon or as small as a squad, depending on the flexibility required by the CO to react to the enemy situation. If the enemy has few choices within the company area of operations, one or two squads may be enough. If, however, the enemy's most probable COA is hard to predict and he has many avenues of approach, the CO may decide to retain an entire platoon as a reserve. Some situations may require committed forces to be prepared to act as the company reserve. Therefore, the CO's estimate will indicate which platoon has the least dangerous mission. This platoon will be tasked to be prepared to be the company reserve and given prioritized missions for planning purposes.

c. The reserve is assigned a BP or AA near its most likely place of commitment. It should be located where it can support the main effort and accomplish its be-prepared missions. However, it should also be in a covered and concealed location where soldiers are likely to remain uncommitted until necessary and mentally and physically ready until committed. An example of a be-prepared mission assigned to the leader of the reserve is: "In priority, be prepared to block an envelopment to the west to protect the company flank, destroy enemy forces in EA Green to prevent enemy penetration of PL Blue, and occupy BP 5 to destroy enemy attempting to envelop 3d platoon." In the absence of these be-prepared missions, the leader of the reserve begins his planning based on his own estimate.

d. The reserve can assist the CO with other tasks not related to its primary defensive mission, such as resupply or reconnaissance. However, the CO must ensure the reserve has enough preparation and rehearsal time for its probable missions and is immediately available when required. The reserve can perform any critical task for the CO. The

following are some common tasks; they are always assigned in priority. The purpose of each task must be clearly stated.

(1) *Block a penetration.* The reserve blocks an enemy penetration by fire or by maneuver (Figure 5-7). The defending platoons help by firing across the flanks of the penetration when possible. When the company reserve is blocking a penetration, the battalion reserve may counterattack to destroy the penetrating force. Indirect fire helps to contain and reduce the penetration.

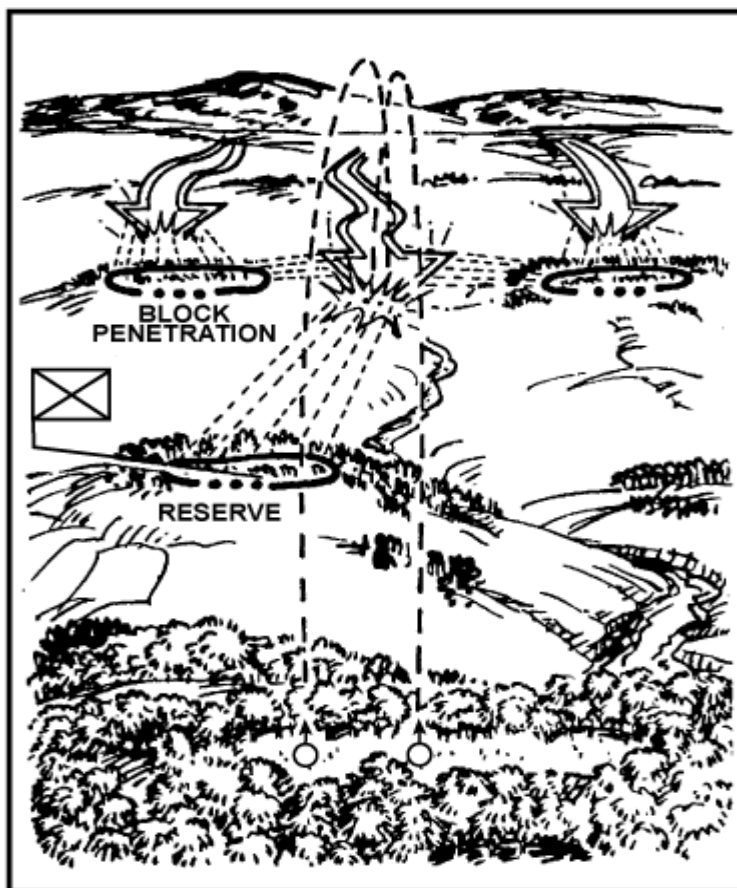


Figure 5-7. A reserve blocking a penetration.

(2) *Secure the company flanks and rear.* The reserve prepares supplementary positions to secure the company flanks and rear (Figure 5-8). The CO selects which approach to secure. The reserve's position must tie in with the supplementary positions of the forward platoons and with adjacent units. The reserve may have to occupy a supplementary position to secure a flank when the sector of an adjacent company has been penetrated.



Figure 5-8. A reserve securing the company flanks and rear.

(3) *Support a forward platoon by fire.* For this mission, the reserve is positioned where it can fire into unoccupied areas between forward platoons and on their flanks and rear (Figure 5-9). The reserve's position must be close enough to the forward platoon's primary position so that it can hit enemy soldiers who bypass that position. The reserve is normally kept intact and is moved by the CO as the situation dictates.

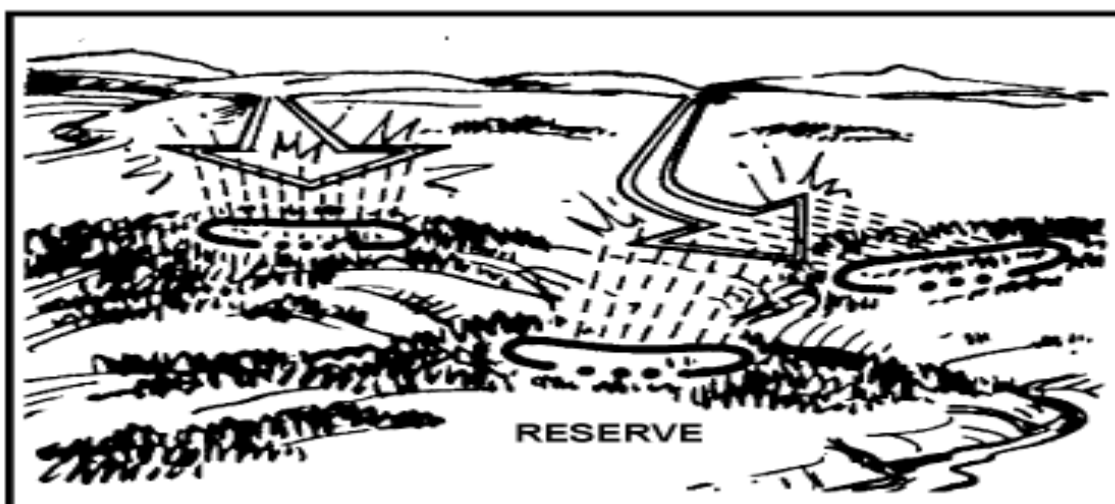


Figure 5-9. A reserve supporting a forward platoon.

NOTE: The following paragraph describes company-directed and company-controlled counterattacks. For a discussion of the company counterattacking as the battalion reserve, see paragraph 5-17 or FM 7-20.

(4) *Counterattack.* The objective of a counterattack is normally the complete destruction of the enemy. That is to reinforce success, not failure (Figure 5-10). The CO plans for a counterattack on one or more possible penetrations. Each is a complete attack plan and has a tentative objective and a direction of attack. A plan may have an LD, a route to the LD, an attack position, an LOA, or an RFL with defending platoons. With

time, each counterattack plan is rehearsed in order of priority. At least a dry run or a walk-through of the attack is performed. This helps synchronize the plan with the forward platoon's actions. The reserve executes its other tasks until the CO gives the counterattack order. When initiated, it becomes the main effort and gets priority of all available supporting assets.

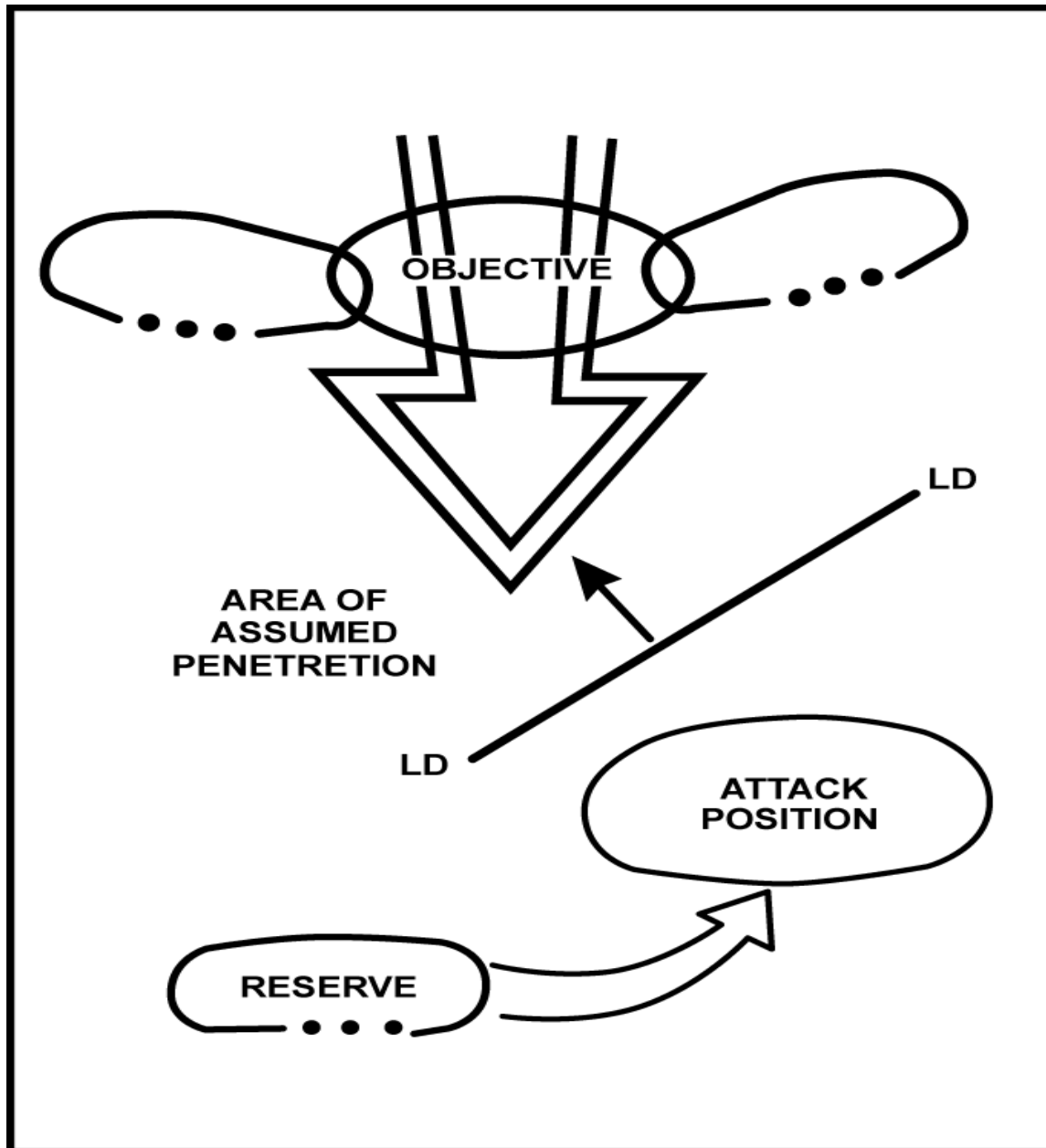


Figure 5-10. A reserve counterattacking.

5-9. LOGISTICS CONSIDERATIONS

The CO selects the general locations for the company trains, the company casualty collection point, and the EPW collection point.

a. The company trains are usually split—some elements join the company and other elements join battalion combat trains. If augmented with medical/transportation assets from battalion, only those vehicles, personnel, and supplies needed to immediately support the company are forward with the company. The forward elements of the company trains should be in defilade (in a covered and concealed position) behind the company.

b. Equipment that is not constantly needed by soldiers, such as rucksacks, sleeping gear, and personal items, should be maintained in the battalion field trains and brought forward only when needed.

c. The company casualty collection point and the EPW collection point are normally in defilade to the rear of the company. The CO should consider the likely movement of casualties to the rear, generally following the natural lines of drift, to select the casualty collection points.

5-10. COMMAND POST LOCATION

The CO locates a CP where he can best control the battle (Figure 5-11). The CO must also consider security and communications requirements when positioning the CP (see Chapter 2).

a. The CP should be in defilade and concealed from air and ground observation. The CO also selects covered and concealed routes to and from the CP. The CP normally provides its own security with headquarters personnel; however, more security may be obtained by positioning the CP near the reserve. Fighting positions are prepared at the CP.

b. The company may establish an alternate CP to assume command of the company if the CP is destroyed or ineffective. Normally, the XO, 1SG, and possibly the senior medic locate there. This may also be the casualty collection point. In this case, the alternate CP bunker should be large enough to provide overhead cover for the casualties.

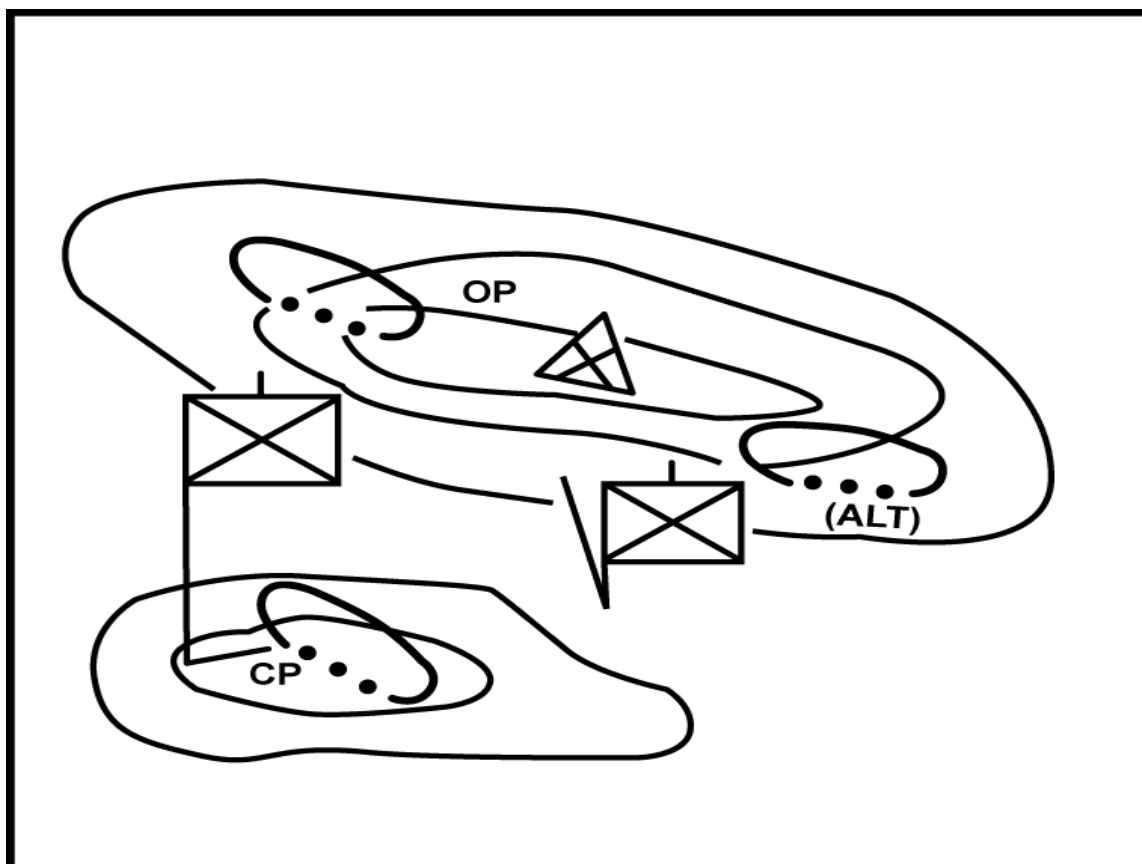


Figure 5-11. Command post.

Section III. CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS

This section discusses the sequence of actions that an infantry company normally follows to conduct a defensive mission. The company conducts a reconnaissance before occupying the area. The unit immediately begins its preparations IAW a detailed priority of work. The use of time, particularly daylight hours, is critical to the success of the defense. Once the enemy attacks, the battle is fought IAW the CO's concept, which may include a counterattack as the decisive action. The company reorganizes throughout the fight to maintain its effectiveness.

5-11. RECONNAISSANCE

Before occupying a defensive position, the CO normally halts the company short of the position, establishes local security, and assembles his platoon leaders for a reconnaissance of the position. The reconnaissance may be conducted in many different ways. The CO may first reconnoiter the defensive position without his platoon leaders and then reconnoiter again with them. The time available will have a major impact on the conduct of the reconnaissance. In extreme cases, a map reconnaissance may be the only means available to the CO.

a. As in any tactical operation, the reconnaissance plan is developed to confirm or deny the concept for the defense. The specific requirements for the leader's reconnaissance must be identified and prioritized. Once this is completed, the CO may

assemble the key leaders and plan one reconnaissance patrol, or he may assign missions to each subordinate unit.

b. Normally the key leaders involved in the leader's reconnaissance include the CO, FSO, platoon leaders, section leaders, and the leaders of any attached units/weapons. In addition to the key leaders, additional personnel will be required to provide communications and security. The size of the leaders reconnaissance is dependent upon the plan to conduct the reconnaissance; the need for security, speed, and stealth; and also the occupation plan for the defense.

c. During the reconnaissance, he confirms enemy avenues of approach; primary, alternate, and supplementary positions for platoons and weapons; dead space in front of the positions; and locations for the company CP, OP, trains, and the EPW collection point.

5-12. OCCUPATION OF THE DEFENSE

The CO must plan the occupation of the defense. This is the movement of the company from their present locations into the assigned area for the defense. Occupation plans for various defensive techniques may be SOP (see paragraph 5-12b). The plan must be based on the defensive concept; it may include a simple route, order of movement, and platoon/section release points. Or it may be a detailed plan involving the leader's reconnaissance, a helicopter insertion into company areas, and an immediate transition to the defensive mission.

a. All occupation plans should logically support the defensive concept and provide for the security of the force. They take advantage of cover, concealment, and limited visibility periods and maximize the use of available time for the preparation of the defense.

b. In a company occupation of a battle position, the company halts in a covered and concealed location to the rear of the battle position, and local security is established. The leader's reconnaissance is conducted. Security elements/guides may be left in position as the leaders return to the company. Then the company moves forward as a unit or by platoons/sections to occupy their positions. At a designated place, the CO releases control of the platoons to the platoon leaders, who move their platoons forward and occupy their positions (FM 7-8). They follow the priority of work established by the CO in preparing their defensive positions.

5-13. PRIORITY OF WORK

This is a set method of controlling the preparation and conduct of a defense. It should be prescribed by SOP to include individual duties. The CO changes priorities based on the situation. The leaders in the company should all have a specific priority of work for their duty position.

a. Although listed in sequence, several tasks may be performed at the same time. An example priority of work sequence is as follows:

- Establish the company R&S operation.
- Post local security.
- Position TOWs, Dragons, machine guns, and soldiers and assign sectors of fire.
- Position other assets (CP, mortars, vehicles).

- Designate FPLs/FPFs.
 - Clear fields of fire and prepare range cards/sector sketches.
 - Adjust indirect-fire FPFs. The firing unit FDC should provide a safety box that is clear of all friendly units before firing any adjusting rounds.
 - Prepare fighting positions.
 - Install wire communications, if applicable.
 - Emplace obstacles and mines.
 - Mark/improve marking for TRPs and direct fire control measures.
 - Improve primary fighting positions such as overhead cover.
 - Prepare alternate and supplementary positions.
 - Establish sleep/rest plan.
 - Reconnoiter movements.
 - Rehearse engagements/disengagements.
 - Adjust positions/control measures as required.
 - Stockpile ammunition, food, and water.
 - Dig trenches between positions.
 - Reconnoiter routes.
 - Continue to improve positions.
- b. Routine priorities for various duty positions are as follows:
- (1) *Company commander*. Many of these duties can be delegated to subordinates, but the CO must ensure they are done. The CO must—
 - (a) Establish local security. Set up OPs if not already done and establish a company perimeter.
 - (b) Conduct a leader's reconnaissance with the platoon and section leaders. Confirm or deny significant deductions or assumptions from the estimate. Designate primary, alternate, and supplementary positions for platoons, sections, and supporting elements. Require platoons to conduct coordination. Designate kill zones, engagement areas, major barriers, and the general CP location. Position key weapons.
 - (c) Check the CP and brief the 1SG/XO on the situation and logistics requirements.
 - (d) Upon receipt of the platoon sector sketches, make two copies of a defensive sector sketch and a fire plan. Retain one and send one to the battalion (Figure 5-12).
 - (e) Confirm the platoon positions before digging starts. Coordinate with the left and right units.
 - (f) Check with the battalion commander for any changes or updates in the orders.
 - (g) Finish the security, deception, counterattack, and barrier plans.
 - (h) Walk the company positions after they are dug. Assume a position behind key weapons to confirm clear fields of fire, complete coverage of the sector of fire, and adequate tracking time for wire-guided missiles. Look at weapons from an enemy point of view.
 - (i) Check dissemination of information, interlocking fires, dead space, and security. Correct deficiencies immediately.

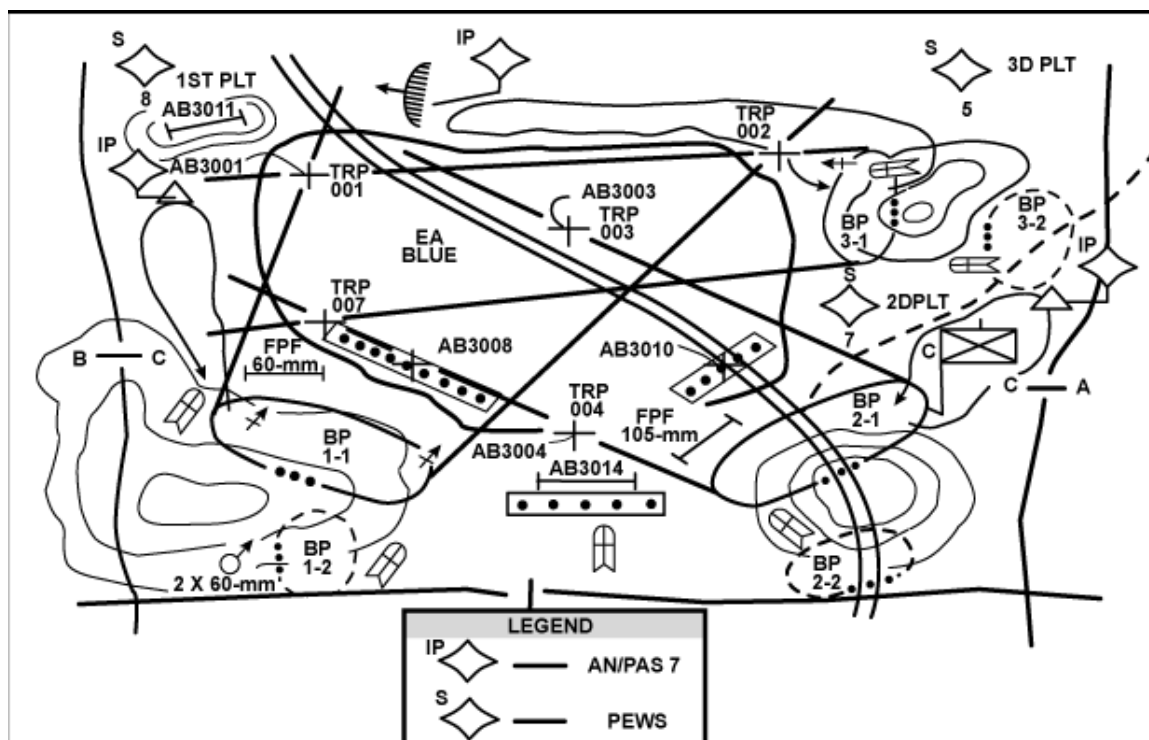


Figure 5-12. Company defensive sector sketch.

- (2) *First sergeant and executive officer.* One of them must—
 - (a) Establish the company CP. Ensure wire communications link the platoons, sections, and attached elements and send a guide to battalion communications, if applicable.
 - (b) Establish casualty collection points, company logistic release points, and EPW collection points.
 - (c) Brief platoon sergeants on the CP location, logistics plan, and routes between positions.
 - (d) Assist the CO with the sector sketch.
 - (e) Request and allocate pioneer tools, barrier material, rations, water, and ammunition.
 - (f) Walk the positions with the CO. Start supervising emplacement of the platoons and sections, and check range cards and sector sketches.
 - (g) Establish routine security or alert plan, radio watch, and sleep plan. Brief the CO.
 - (h) Supervise continuously and assist the CO with other duties as assigned.
- (3) *Fire support officer.* The FSO must—
 - (a) Assist the CO in planning the indirect fires to support the defense.
 - (b) Advise the CO on the current status of all firing units and on the use of smoke or illumination.
 - (c) Coordinate with the battalion FSO, firing units, and platoon FOs to ensure the fire plan is synchronized and fully understood.
 - (d) Ensure the platoon FO's equipment is fully operational.
 - (e) Ensure the indirect fire plan is rehearsed as fully as possible.
 - (f) Ensure all FPFs are adjusted in as soon as possible.

(g) Coordinate and or rehearse any repositioning of FOs within the company sector to ensure they can observe targets or areas of responsibility.

(4) *Mortar platoon/section leader*. He must—

(a) Choose a tentative firing position(s) and OP(s). Complete his portion of the fire plan (based on the company OPORD and his own estimate).

(b) Take part in the company leader's reconnaissance. Confirm or adjust the firing position, select OPs, and coordinate the indirect fire plan with the company FSO.

(c) Issue FRAGOs to squads. Conduct a section leader's reconnaissance with squad leaders. Require squad leaders to coordinate with platoons and squads for security and logistic support.

(d) Direct the mortar section to begin digging.

(e) Establish internal and external wire communications, if applicable.

(f) Assist the FSO in completing the fire plan and overlays.

(g) Register/adjust the FPF.

(h) Inspect the mortar position.

(i) Reconnoiter routes to alternate firing positions.

(5) *Antiarmor section leader*. He must—

(a) Select tentative firing positions based on the OPORD, estimate, and map reconnaissance, if the section is acting in an antiarmor role.

(b) Take part in the company leader's reconnaissance to confirm or switch firing positions and to coordinate with platoon leaders.

(c) Issue FRAGOs to teams. Conduct a section leader's reconnaissance with team leaders. Require team leaders to coordinate with platoons and squads for security and logistic support.

(d) Devise an antiarmor fire plan. Assist with the company sector sketch. Brief the CO and 1SG or XO.

(e) Ensure the required section equipment and supplies (batteries and bottles) are available and coordinate the resupply requirements.

(f) Inspect positions. Check sight pictures, cover and concealment, range cards, and communications. Correct deficiencies.

(g) Ensure the fire control measures are understood and clearly marked for observation during limited visibility.

(6) *Communications NCO*. He must—

(a) Supervise setting up wire and radio communications with the battalion, platoons, and sections.

(b) Organize a radio watch.

(c) Supervise the performance of PMCS on the radios.

(d) Check the platoon RATELOs for PMCS and their knowledge of SOI.

(e) Brief the CO.

(f) Assist the 1SG/XO, as required. Help organize local security for the CP, dig fighting positions, prepare OPORDs, and so forth.

(7) *NBC NCO*. He must—

(a) Assist the CO with an updated MOPP analysis.

(b) Ensure that chemical detection and monitoring procedures are established and maintained.

(c) Coordinate for hasty decontamination support.

- (d) Coordinate smoke support.
- (e) Supervise decontamination operations.
- (f) Provide guidance on operations in nuclear, biological, and chemical conditions.

5-14. TIME MANAGEMENT

A critical aspect of defensive planning is managing available time. The CO decides what must be accomplished during daylight to allow platoon and squad defensive preparation to continue during darkness. Because there is never enough time to prepare the defense, the CO must make the best use of time available.

a. Platoon and squad positions identified and prepared during hours of limited visibility may not be completely effective during daylight. The CO's initial estimate of the time available must include the amount of daylight needed for subordinate leaders to identify primary positions.

b. The CO may establish a detailed time schedule for completing key actions/events in the priority of work. This ensures that all units are generally at the same point in the priority of work. This also allows rehearsals to be scheduled for the entire unit. An example of this time schedule might be:

- 1000—Primary fighting positions dug and camouflaged.
- 1500—Company rehearsal for the counterattack.
- 1600—Leaders' sandtable rehearsal of the indirect fire plan.
- 1900—Primary positions complete, platoons rehearse disengagement and movement to supplementary positions.
- 2200—Limited visibility rehearsal for the counterattack.

5-15. DAYLIGHT SCENARIO

A planning scenario is provided herein for conducting an estimate when the limited hours of daylight are a significant factor.

a. The CO receives the defensive OPORD at 0900 on Day 1 in an AA 5 kilometers from the defensive positions. The enemy is not expected to attack within 48 hours, which is no earlier than 0900 on Day 3. BMNT is at 0700 and EENT is at 1800. The CO's one-third of the time would allow him to complete issuing the OPORD at 0100 on Day 2. This, however, will waste the available time for position preparation the first night and, at first light, platoon leaders will still be reconnoitering to site key weapons and squad positions. In the best case, personnel will be just starting to prepare fighting positions two hours after daylight (0900, Day 2), leaving them only 24 hours to prepare.

b. A better use of the available daylight hours in the above scenario follows:

- Day 1, 0900–1000: Upon receipt of the battalion OPORD, the CO conducts a quick METT–T analysis. He then issues an immediate FRAGO to move to and occupy a position in the defensive area; places the XO in charge of the preparation and movement of the company; and departs to the defensive area with his platoon leaders, FSO, and security elements from each platoon.
- 1100: The CO and platoon leaders (with security) arrive on site.
- 1115: The CO dispatches platoon leaders (with security) to reconnoiter key points of their tentative positions/sectors as determined from the map reconnaissance.
- 1115 to 1300: The CO makes a tentative plan.

- 1300: Upon the return of the platoon leaders, the CO revises the tentative plan based upon the reconnaissance reports.
- 1330 to 1400: The CO issues the OPORD to the available orders group. Platoon leaders then continue their planning process.
- 1530: When the rest of the company arrives, the platoon leaders have reconnoitered their positions and completed their platoon OPORDs.
- 1600: Squad leaders designate primary, alternate, and supplementary positions during daylight. The platoon leader and CO have two hours of daylight left to make adjustments before position preparation is final.

5-16. DEFENSIVE BATTLE

The defensive battle starts when the planned signal/event for initiating fires occurs. In a very non-linear fight, the authority for the initial engagement may be delegated to the lowest level. This initial engagement may be a squad ambush, massed fires in an EA, or by engaging the enemy at maximum effective range of each system. The platoon and squad leaders then conduct the fight in accordance with the CO's concept. The following is a discussion of a centralized company defense. Remember, this does not apply when conducting a decentralized, nonlinear defensive battle consisting of squad and platoon actions.

a. All company weapons fire at appropriate targets as they come within range IAW the fire plan. Leaders and FOs are alert to direct and control fire where it is needed to avoid wasting ammunition.

b. The rate of fire increases as the enemy approaches. If tanks and infantry are attacking, fire is placed to force the tanks to button up and separate foot soldiers from the tanks.

c. If attacking formations are not broken up forward of the company's position, the enemy will assault. The CO then calls for his FPF. Machine guns that have an FPL fire on that FPL; those that do not, fire along their PDF. Mortars and artillery fire their FPFs if allotted. All other weapons fire within their sectors until the assault has been halted.

(1) An arranged signal, such as a flare, is used to stop the firing when the assault has been halted. The FPF may be repeated, as needed. Since the FPF expends a lot of ammunition, it should only be called for to stop an enemy assault from closing on the position. If the enemy gets through the FPF, he is repelled by close combat and or counterattack.

(2) If the company is threatened from the flanks or the rear, the CO may move platoons or the reserve to fight from supplementary positions. If platoons and squads are forced from their primary positions, they move to their alternate positions.

d. Throughout the conduct of the defense, the platoon leaders keep the CO informed of their situation. He, in turn, must keep the battalion commander informed of the company's situation.

e. Once the enemy is repelled, the CO reestablishes OPs and sends patrol units forward to maintain enemy contact. Indirect fire is called on areas where the enemy is apt to regroup. In some situations, a spoiling attack against this force may be appropriate. The company reorganizes and prepares for another enemy attack.

5-17. COUNTERATTACK

The same principles for any attack apply for counterattacks. Timing is critical. To be decisive, the counterattack is conducted when the enemy is overextended, dispersed, and disorganized during his attack. Counterattacks may be conducted by a designated counterattack unit, by the reserve, or by a subordinate unit with a be-prepared mission to conduct a counterattack. It may be a planned action in the CO's concept or it may be an immediate action by a subordinate unit based on the situation. All counterattacks should be rehearsed in the same conditions that they are expected to fight in. Counterattacks are most effective against an enemy force that is has been stopped.

a. Counterattacks may be extremely effective when conducted by small units as part of a decentralized, nonlinear defense. When combined with an ambush to halt and disorganize an attacker, a small counterattack force can achieve superior combat power. If the attack is not decisive, the force can disengage and seek out another part of the enemy to attack.

b. Larger scale counterattacks that are key to the CO's concept require additional planning, coordination, and rehearsals. Normally, the defense is organized to force the enemy into a position where the counterattack can be decisive. The timings, responsibilities, and fire plan must be understood by the entire company. Ideally, the counterattack force is located in a covered and concealed location requiring minimal movement to begin the assault or fires. The farther they must move, the more likely the enemy will be able to identify them and react to their attack.

c. When the company reserve conducts the counterattack, it normally becomes the main effort and is given priority of fire from all available fire support. The reserve avoids friendly positions, makes a quick decisive assault, and clears the penetrated area. Any soldiers from the forward platoon who stay in the penetrated area come under the control of the reserve when it comes into this. Once the counterattack is ordered, a new reserve should be constituted. When the CO decides to commit his reserve in a counterattack, he notifies the battalion commander at once.

d. Any subordinate unit may conduct an immediate counterattack if they are in position with adequate combat potential to be effective and it supports the CO's concept. Simple contingency plans designating rally points and likely support positions and or kill zones will provide this flexibility.

5-18. REORGANIZATION

Reorganization must begin automatically at the lowest levels. As soon as the engagement begins, the leaders in the company must be aware of the status of their units and reorganize immediately when required. However, some of the considerations in this section must wait until a lull in the battle.

a. **Man Key Weapons.** Assign personnel to replace key soldiers lost during the fight; for example, ensure crew-served weapons are manned and the chain of command is reestablished.

b. **Reestablish Security.** If soldiers withdrew from the OPs to their fighting positions, return them to their OPs. If some did not get back to the platoon position, check their status and replace casualties. Coordinate with adjacent units to determine the situation in their areas. As soon as feasible, reestablish the security system.

c. **Treat or Evacuate Casualties.** Treat casualties as far forward as practical. Those who can continue to fight are returned to their positions; evacuate the others. Report the dead and evacuate the bodies as soon as practical.

d. **Redistribute Ammunition and Supplies.** Distribute remaining ammunition and supplies equally among the soldiers, including ammunition from casualties. Issue any stockpiled ammunition to the squads; take a quick inventory of other needs. Submit status reports to the company headquarters, including ammunition, barrier materials, and medical supplies. Consider the use of any enemy arms and ammunition that may be available from their casualties.

e. **Reposition.** During the assault, the enemy may have pinpointed some of the positions. Move to an alternate or supplementary position, rarely can surprise be achieved twice from the same location. If certain positions are in danger or depend upon surprise to be effective, reposition soldiers and weapons (particularly crew-served weapons) that are vulnerable or do not have good observation and fields of fire. Adjust positions to maintain mutual support.

f. **Reestablish Communications.** Provide a status report to the CO. If radio contact is impossible and landline not available, send a messenger. The unit SOP should allow for units to continue operations without communications. Only send a messenger when unable to continue the mission or when changing the plan. If a phone line was cut during the attack, soldiers on each end of the line try to find and repair the break. If they cannot, they lay new wire. If a signal, such as a green star cluster, was used to initiate fire, consider changing that signal since the enemy may know what it means. These signals must be coordinated with adjacent units to prevent confusion.

g. **Repair Fighting Positions.** Each soldier checks and, if needed, replaces the camouflage, overhead cover, and sandbags on existing positions and camouflages new positions.

h. **Repair/Replace Damaged/Breached Obstacles, Mines, and Booby Traps.** Replace these devices only if enemy soldiers are far enough away so it can be done safely. This is risky, especially if the enemy has snipers. Wait for poor visibility to do so or use smoke to hinder observation.

i. **Use Snipers.** Before an attack is initiated and after it has been stopped, the defending unit may add to its security by using snipers. They should be allowed to move anywhere in the position. They find and hit targets such as enemy reconnaissance parties, infiltration teams, leaders, obstacle-breaching teams, weapon crews, stragglers, and enemy snipers. If no dedicated snipers are available, use the best marksmen in the unit. They are effective out to 560 meters when armed with the M16A2.

Section IV. DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

There are many different defensive techniques that an infantry company may employ. A properly conducted estimate will focus the defensive concept by identifying the potential decisive points. The commander then determines the most effective means of positioning/maneuvering his units/weapons to generate overwhelming combat power at these points. The techniques discussed in this section should be used only as basic approaches to developing a defensive concept. The ideal concept may be a combination of several different techniques or, like Chamberlain's successful defensive bayonet charge down Big Round Top at Gettysburg, it may not even be discussed in a doctrinal manual.

5-19. NONLINEAR DEFENSE

The nonlinear defense is the most decentralized and dynamic defense conducted by an infantry company. It is frequently used when operating against an enemy force that has equal or greater firepower and mobility capabilities. This type of defense is almost exclusively enemy oriented and is not well-suited for retaining terrain. This defense depends on surprise, offensive action, and the initiative of small unit leaders to be successful (Figure 5-13). It is a very fluid defense with little static positioning involved.

a. Normally, this defensive technique is directed by battalion when the battalion concept does not focus the company at a single decisive point. An example is when the battalion assigns the company a sector and a mission that focuses the company on the enemy force. Mutual support is achieved solely through the linkage of purposes in the mission statements.

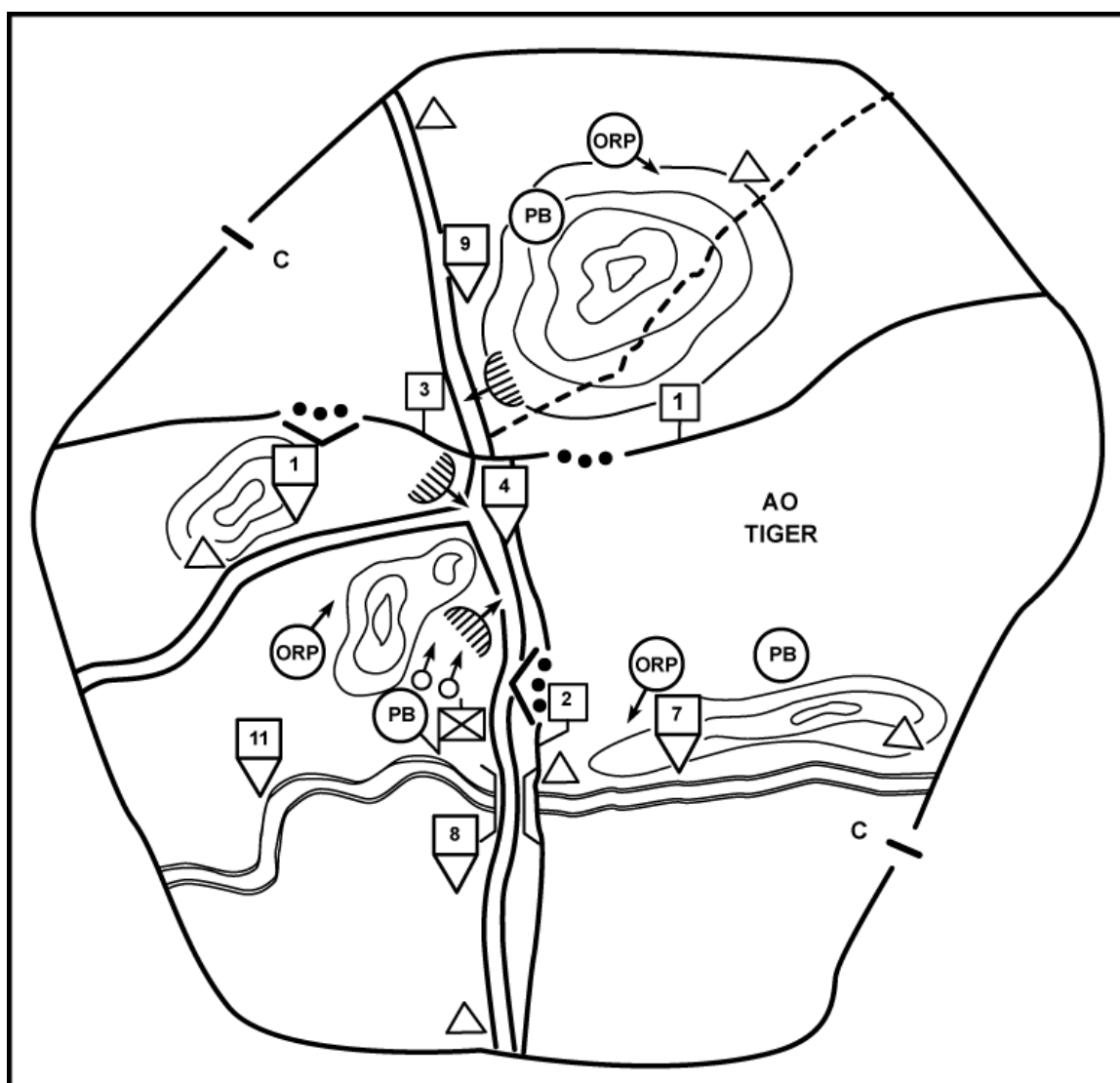


Figure 5-13. Nonlinear defense.

b. The CO may decide to conduct a nonlinear defense when he is unable to identify a single decisive point that will allow the company to concentrate combat power and achieve its mission. Terrain that prevents mutual support between platoons and or an enemy force capable of directing overwhelming firepower against identified friendly positions also support conducting a defense in this manner.

c. The reconnaissance and security plan for this type of defense will focus on avoiding detection by the enemy's reconnaissance assets. Operating in smaller units supports this requirement. Preparation and activity along likely reconnaissance routes must be closely controlled. Ideally, the enemy reconnaissance will be allowed to move through the area before they are destroyed.

d. The CO assigns platoon sectors and may also identify likely ambush positions and rally points for each platoon. He identifies a main effort and assigns the supporting efforts missions that provide mutual support and degrade the enemy's ability to generate combat power against the main effort. The main effort may be weighted by assigning priority of fires; by the allocation of mines, barrier materials, and other supplies; and by locating the CP, casualty collection point, and most of the caches in their vicinity.

e. The platoons conduct numerous squad and platoon ambushes, raids, and counterattacks—but they avoid decisive engagement. Before the enemy is able to react and concentrate against these small units, they disengage and seek out another enemy weak point. The synchronization for this defense may be event oriented or accomplished by assigning ambush locations and initiating times or signals. The event-oriented synchronization involves identifying key enemy assets or vehicles that, if destroyed/disrupted, will have the greatest effect on the enemy.

f. A company reserve is normally quite small. Due to the extended distances that the company and platoons are operating over, the timely employment of the company reserve in a decisive action is not likely. Generally, the platoons will be able to employ the resources more effectively. A squad-sized company reserve could be employed under the control of the 1SG as a logistics squad, for casualty evacuation, or as a reaction force to support the main effort.

g. Other concerns include the difficulty of conducting resupply operations/casualty evacuation when defending in this manner. The resupply can be affected through prepositioning of the critical supplies (Chapter 8). Casualty evacuation will require detailed planning and battalion support. Casualty collection points must be identified well forward to support each platoon. The evacuation from these points to the BAS or the company collection point is normally accomplished by litter teams moving on routes that avoid the enemy. If possible, vehicular evacuation begins at the company collection point or as far forward as possible. Request that treatment teams from the BAS be positioned at the company collection point particularly if it is expected that casualties may have to be held until darkness for evacuation.

5-20. DEFENSE IN SECTOR

This disposition may consist of platoon sectors, a series of mutually supporting BPs on armor-restrictive terrain, or a combination of the two (Figure 5-14). Positions are arrayed in depth. The strength of this defense comes from its flexibility. This defense normally orients on the enemy force and not retaining terrain. It is effective because it allows the enemy to expose his flanks and critical C2 and CS assets through his own maneuver into the depth of the defense.

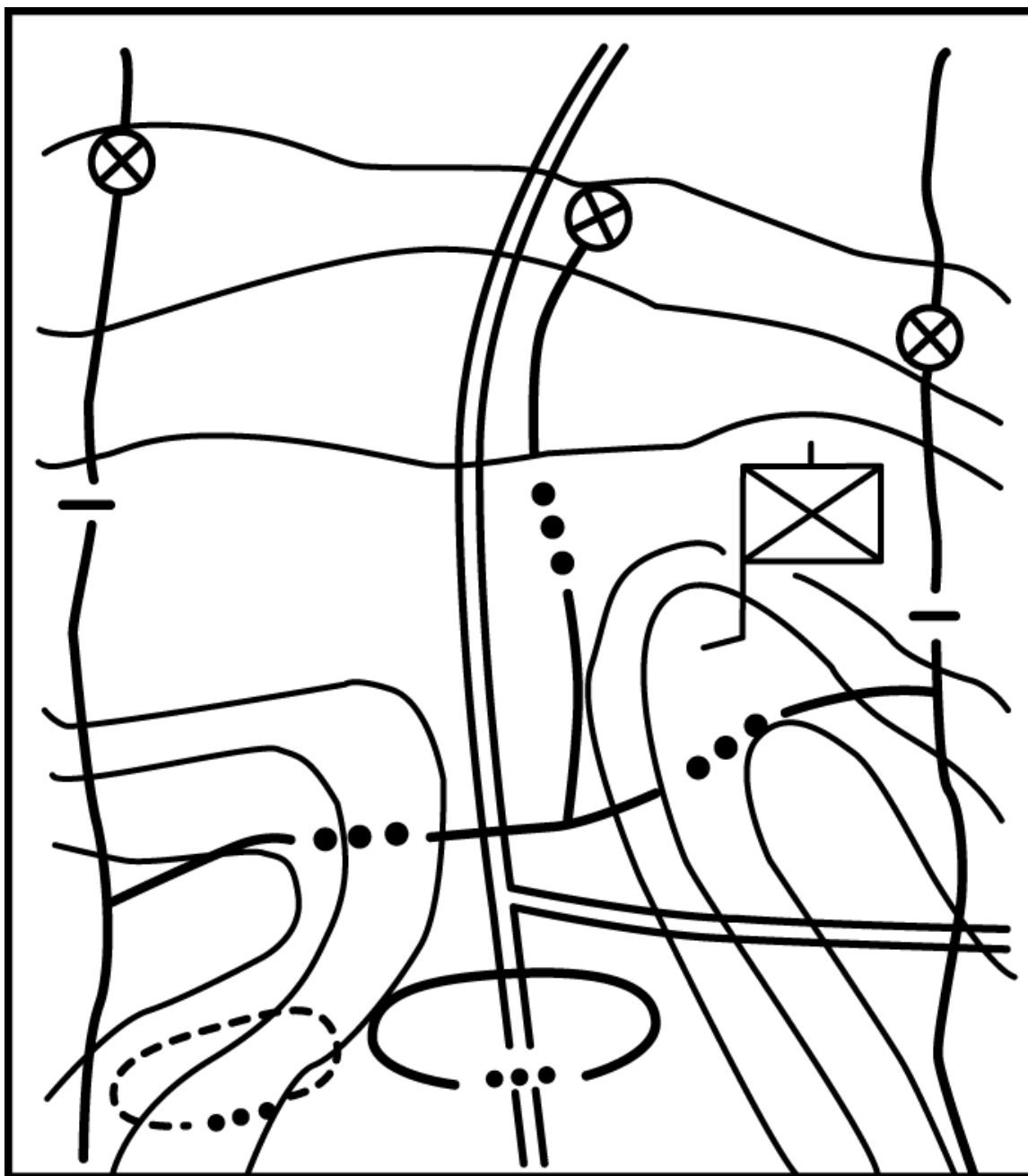


Figure 5-14. Defense in sector.

a. The company defense in sector may be fought very similar to the nonlinear defense. This is done by assigning platoon sectors. This decentralized technique for conducting a defense in sector requires greater initiative and delegates more of the control to subordinate leaders. The small-unit actions are very similar to the nonlinear defense. When required, squads or platoons may disengage independently and move to another location within the sector to continue the fight. Considerations for the company R&S plan and employment of a reserve are also very similar to the nonlinear defense.

b. When fighting a company defense in sector from platoon battle positions, the concept is to defeat the attacker through the depth of his formation, confronting him with effective fires from mutually supporting BPs as he attempts to maneuver around them. Mines, other obstacles, infantry positions, patrols, and PEWs cover gaps that, due to terrain masking or heavy woods, cannot be covered effectively by fire. Units remain in place except for local or internal movement to alternate or supplementary positions. If certain positions become untenable during the battle, the CO may withdraw them according to prepared plans.

(1) One technique is to allow the enemy to move into the EA and destroy him with massed fires. Another technique is to engage the attacker at maximum range with fires from tactical aircraft, attack helicopters, field artillery, and mortars. Then engage with organic antiarmor weapons positioned to deliver fires at maximum effective ranges from flanks and rear. As the enemy closes, antiarmor weapons may move to alternate and supplementary firing positions within the BP to continue firing and to avoid being bypassed.

(2) The company defense in sector from platoon battle positions generally requires the CO to be able to see and control the battle. It also requires good fields of fire to allow mutual support to be achieved. If the terrain or the expected enemy course of action would prevent this, the defense may be more effective if control was more decentralized and the platoons were fighting in sector.

c. A significant concern, particularly when fighting from BPs, is the enemy's ability to isolate a part of the company, fix, and then destroy them. Without effective mutual support between the BPs, this will likely occur. Even with mutual support, responsive and effective fire support may be critical to defending the BPs. Without immediately available fire support, a capable enemy will quickly concentrate combat power against any BP that is identified.

5-21. DEFENSE FROM BATTLE POSITIONS

Fighting from battle positions is a more centralized technique and also more linear at the company level (Figure 5-15). Although this defensive technique tends to be more linear and centralized, it should not be a static defense. Battle positions should be positioned to achieve surprise and to allow maneuver within and between BPs. It is effective in concentrating combat power into an engagement area. It prevents the enemy from isolating one part of the company and concentrating his combat power in this area. Normally, platoons are assigned mutual supporting battle positions that cover the enemy likely avenue of approach. These BPs are located on terrain that provides cover and concealment and restricts vehicular movement.

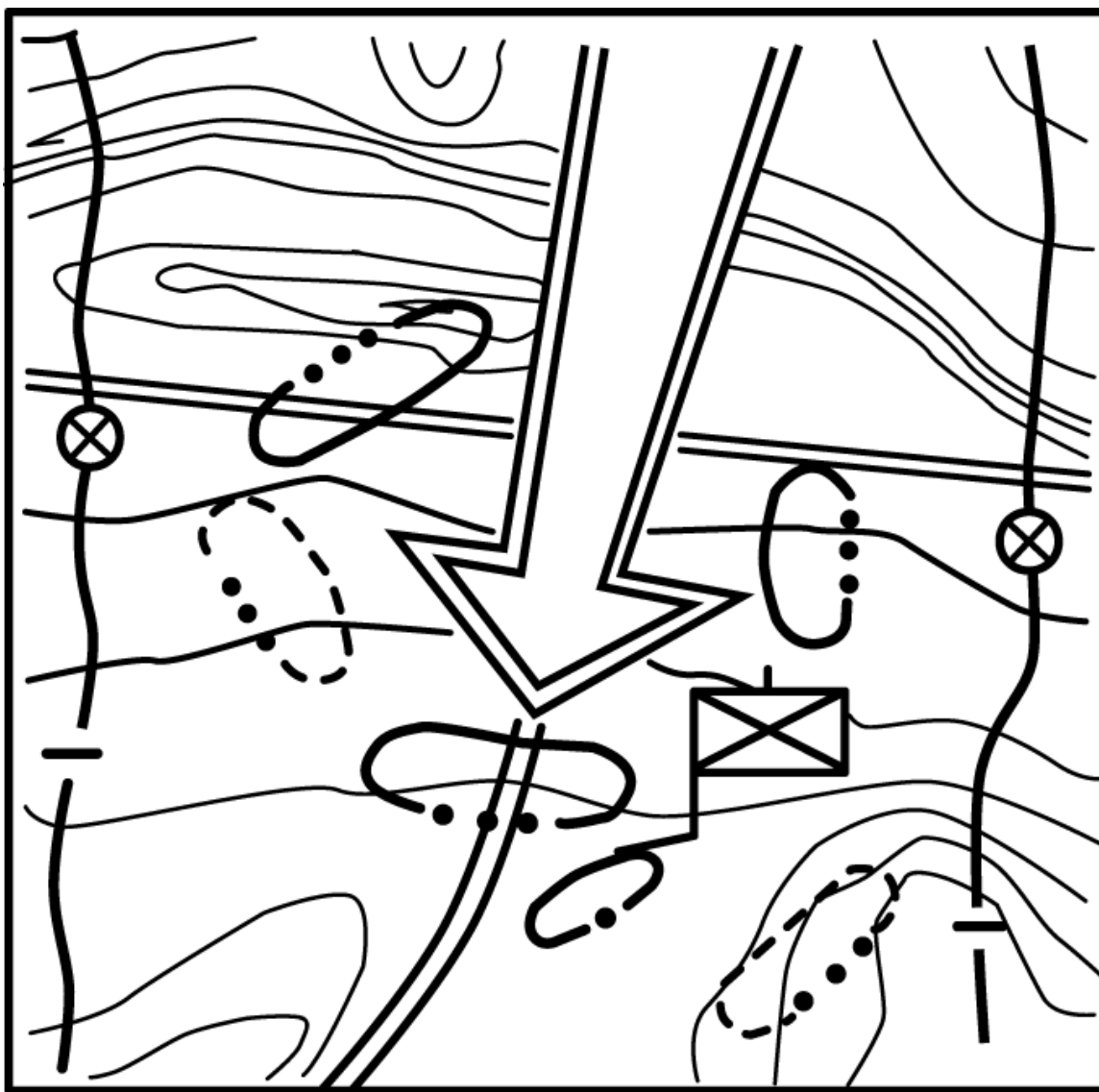


Figure 5-15. Mutually supporting BPs.

a. The commander's concept for fighting this type of defense should concentrate on achieving surprise from each of the BPs. This is accomplished by conducting an effective counterreconnaissance effort to prevent the enemy from locating the BPs and by initiating fires from one BP and waiting for the enemy to react to this engagement prior to engaging from the other BPs (Figure 5-16). Fighting in this manner will cause confusion among the enemy and disrupt his C2 process.

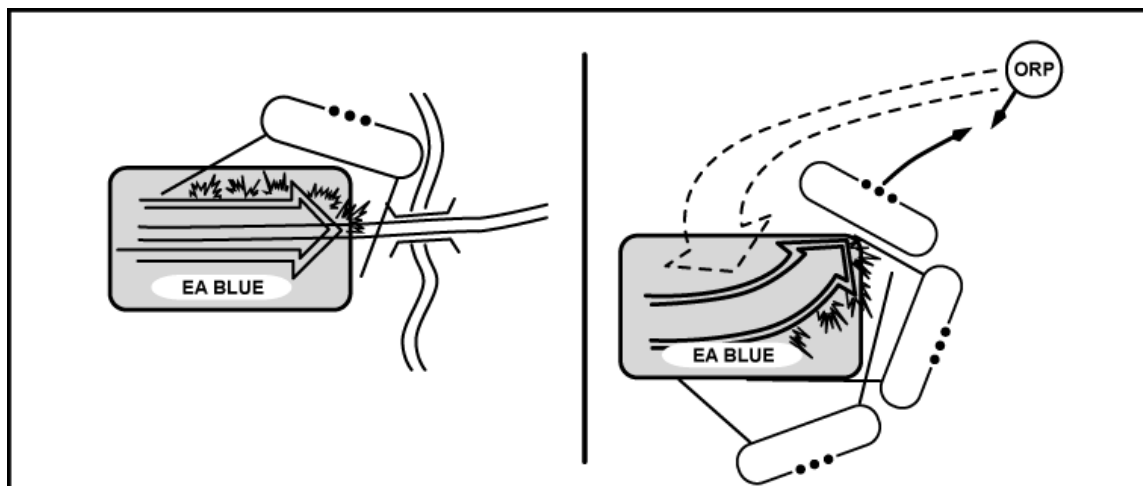


Figure 5-16. Opening fire to achieve surprise.

b. When the terrain provides a large EA and the commander's concept allows most of the enemy into the EA, the company may engage with massed fires from all of the platoon BPs. A disadvantage to this technique is that if there are still uncommitted enemy forces outside the EA, they will know the locations of the BPs and will attempt to isolate and concentrate against them. Contingency plans to disengage from these BPs and reorganize to continue the fight must be developed. This may involve displacing to alternate BPs or disengaging to conduct counterattacks/spoiling attacks against identified enemy C2, CS, or CSS assets.

c. Instead of one company EA, multiple EAs may be identified to provide flexibility to the plan (Figure 5-17). The plan must clearly state when platoons must reorient fires into the alternate engagement area.

5-22. DEFENSE ON A REVERSE SLOPE

An alternative to defending on the forward slope of a hill or a ridge is to defend on a reverse slope (Figure 5-18). In such a defense, the company is deployed on terrain that is masked by the crest of a hill from enemy direct fire and ground observation. Although some units and weapons may be positioned on the forward slope, the crest, or the counterslope (a forward slope of a hill to the rear of a reverse slope), most of them are on the reverse slope. The key to this defense is control of the crest by fire.

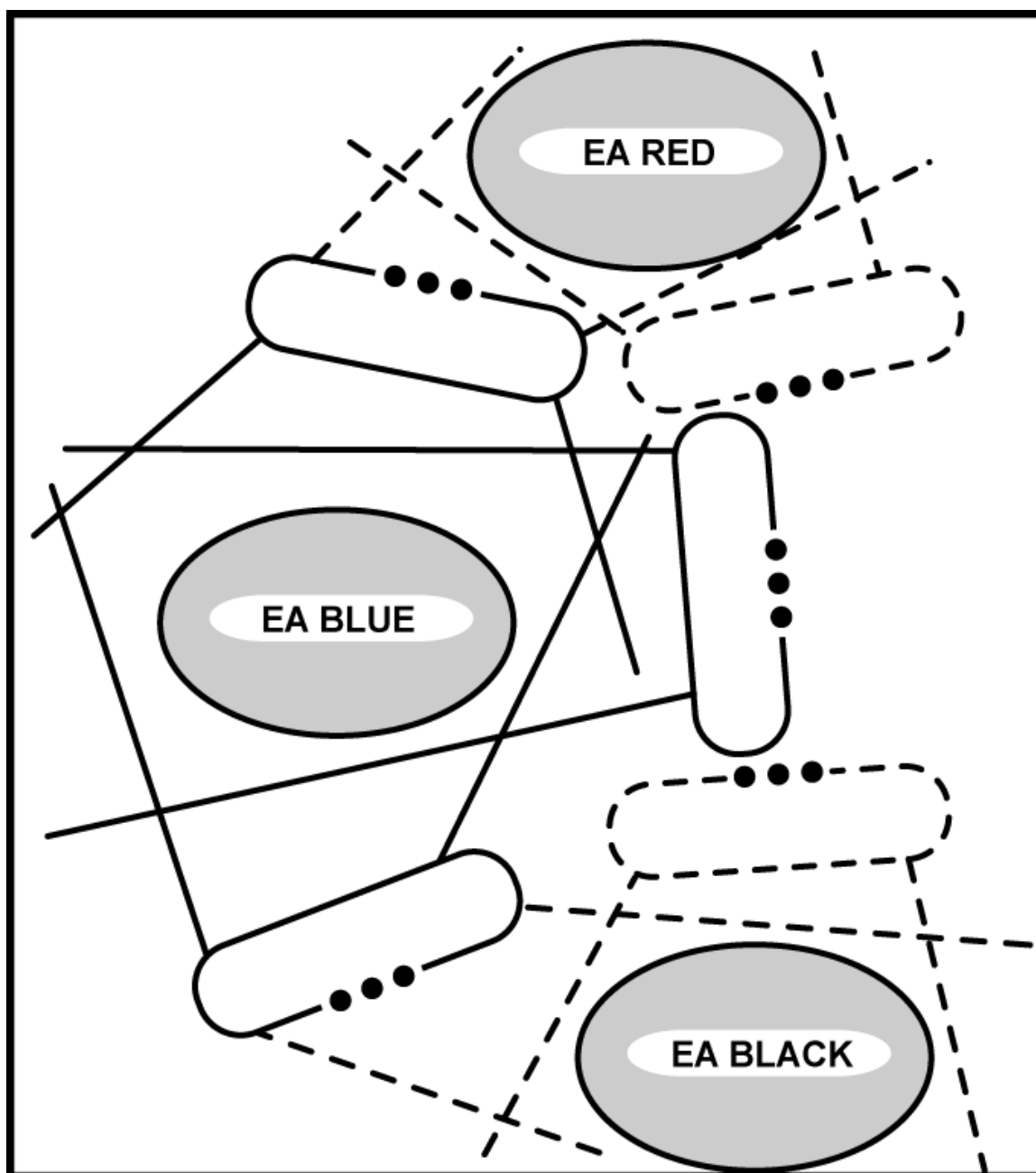


Figure 5-17. Multiple engagement areas.

a. **Considerations.** The following considerations apply when defending on a reverse slope.

(1) The crest protects the company from direct fire. This is a distinct advantage if the attacker has greater weapons range than the defender. The reverse slope defense can eliminate or reduce the "stand off" advantage of the attacker. It also makes enemy adjustment of his indirect fire more difficult since he cannot see his rounds impact. It keeps the enemy's second echelon from supporting the first echelon's assault.

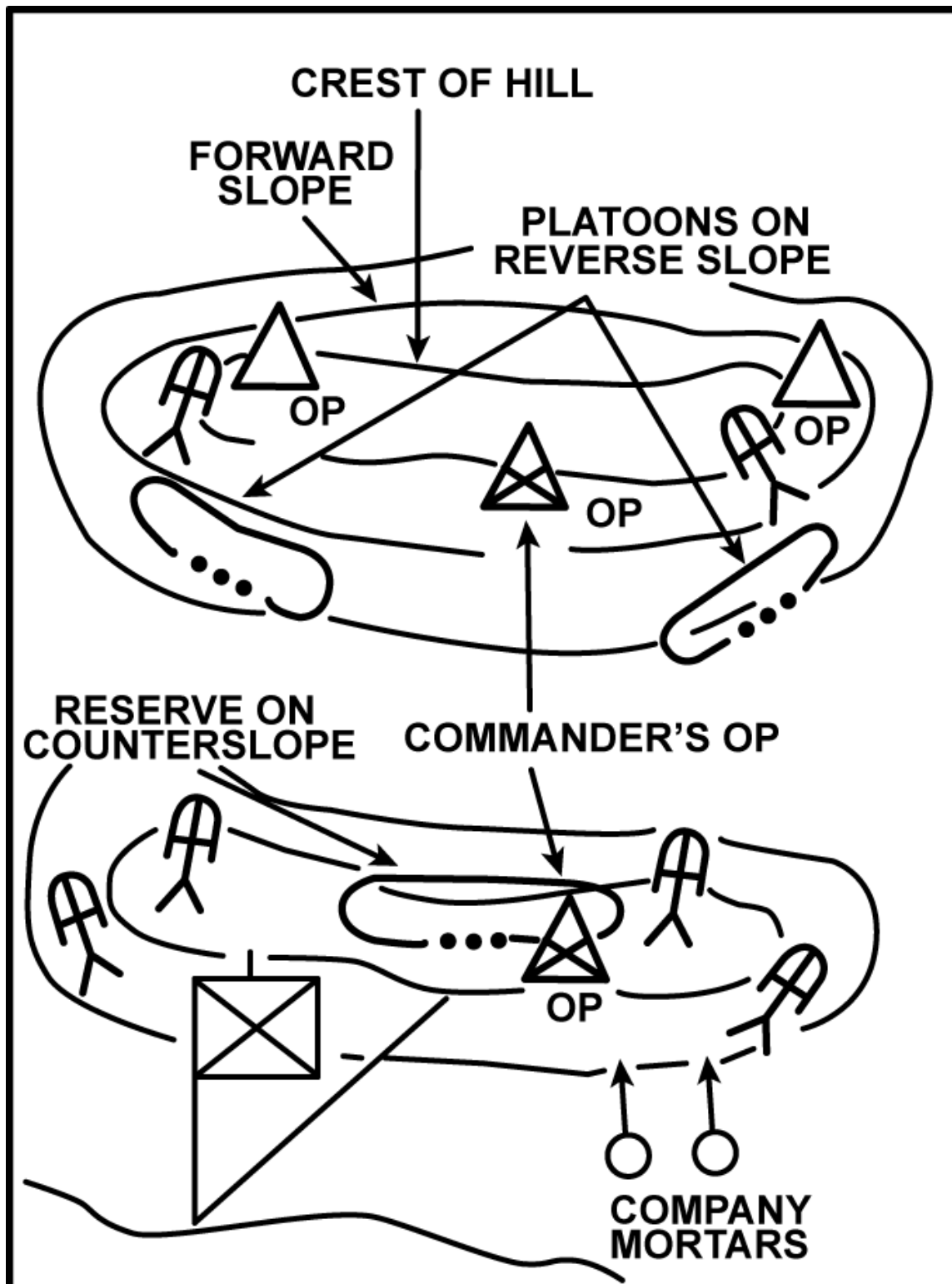


Figure 5-18. Company defense on a reverse slope.

(2) The enemy may be deceived and may advance to close contact before he discovers the defensive position. Therefore, the defender has the advantage of surprise.

(3) The defender can improve positions, build obstacles, and clear fields of fire without disclosing his positions.

(4) The defender may use dummy positions on the forward slope to deceive the enemy.

(5) Resupply and evacuation (when under attack) may be easier when defending on a reverse slope.

(6) Enemy target acquisition and jamming efforts are degraded. Enemy radar, infrared sights, and thermal viewers cannot detect soldiers masked by a hill. Radios with a hill between them and the enemy are less vulnerable to jamming and direction finders.

(7) Enemy use of CAS and attack helicopters is restricted. Enemy aircraft must attack defensive positions from the flank or from the rear, which makes it easier for friendly air defense weapons to hit them.

(8) A counterattacking unit has more freedom of maneuver since it is masked from the enemy's direct fire.

(9) It may allow antiarmor shots at the thinner armor on top of armored vehicles.

(10) The crest can provide protection from the blast effect of a nuclear explosion.

b. **Special Considerations.** The following considerations may apply when defending on a reverse slope.

(1) Observation of the enemy is more difficult. Soldiers in this position see forward no farther than the crest. This makes it hard to determine exactly where the enemy is as he advances, especially when visibility is poor. OPs must be placed forward of the topographic crest for early warning and long-range observation.

(2) Egress from the position may be more difficult.

(3) Fields of fire are normally short.

(4) Obstacles on the forward slope can be covered only with indirect fire or by units on the flanks of the company unless some weapons systems are initially placed forward.

(5) If the enemy gains the crest, he can assault downhill. This may give him a psychological advantage.

(6) If OPs are insufficient or improperly placed, the defenders may have to fight an enemy who suddenly appears in strength at close range.

c. **Feasibility.** A defense on a reverse slope may be effective when—

(1) The enemy has more long-range weapons than the defender.

(2) The forward slope has little cover and concealment.

(3) The forward slope is untenable because of enemy fire.

(4) The forward slope has been lost or not yet gained.

(5) There are better fields of fire on the reverse slope.

(6) It adds to the surprise and deception.

d. **Plans.** The fundamentals of the defense apply to a defense on a reverse slope.

(1) Forward platoon positions should be within 200 to 500 meters of the crest of the defended hill or ridge and sited so they block enemy approaches and exploit existing obstacles. They should permit surprise fire on the crest and the approaches around the crest. Forward fighting positions should have rear and overhead cover to protect friendly soldiers from fratricide.

(2) Post OPs, including FOs, on the crest or the forward slope of the defended hill. At night, OPs and patrol units should be increased to prevent infiltration. Machine guns may be attached to OPs.

(3) Position the company depth platoon/reserve where it can block the most likely penetration, support the forward platoons by fire, protect the flanks and the rear of the company, and, if necessary, counterattack. It may be positioned on the counterslope to the rear of the forward platoons if it can fire and hit the enemy when he reaches the crest of the defended hill.

(4) Position the company CP to the rear where it will not interfere with the reserve or supporting units. The CO may have an OP on the forward slope or crest and another on the reverse slope or counterslope. He uses the OP on the forward slope or crest before the battle starts when he is trying to determine the enemy's intentions. During the fight, he moves to the OP on the reverse slope or counterslope.

(5) Plan indirect fire well forward of, on, and to the flanks of the forward slope, crest, reverse slope, and counterslope. Plan indirect FPF on the crest of the hill to control the crest and stop assaults. Put the mortar section in defilade to the rear of the counterslope.

(6) Reinforce natural obstacles. A hasty protective minefield on the reverse slope—just down from the crest where it can be covered by fire—can slow the enemy's advance and hold him under friendly fire.

(7) The CO normally plans counterattacks. He plans to drive the enemy off the crest by fire, if possible. But he must also be prepared to drive the enemy off by fire and movement.

5-23. PERIMETER DEFENSE

The rifle company prepares a perimeter defense when there are no friendly units adjacent to it (Figure 5-19). A perimeter defense may be used in a reserve position, in an assembly area or patrol base, on a semi-independent operation, during resupply, or when the company is isolated. The following actions constitute setting up a perimeter defense.

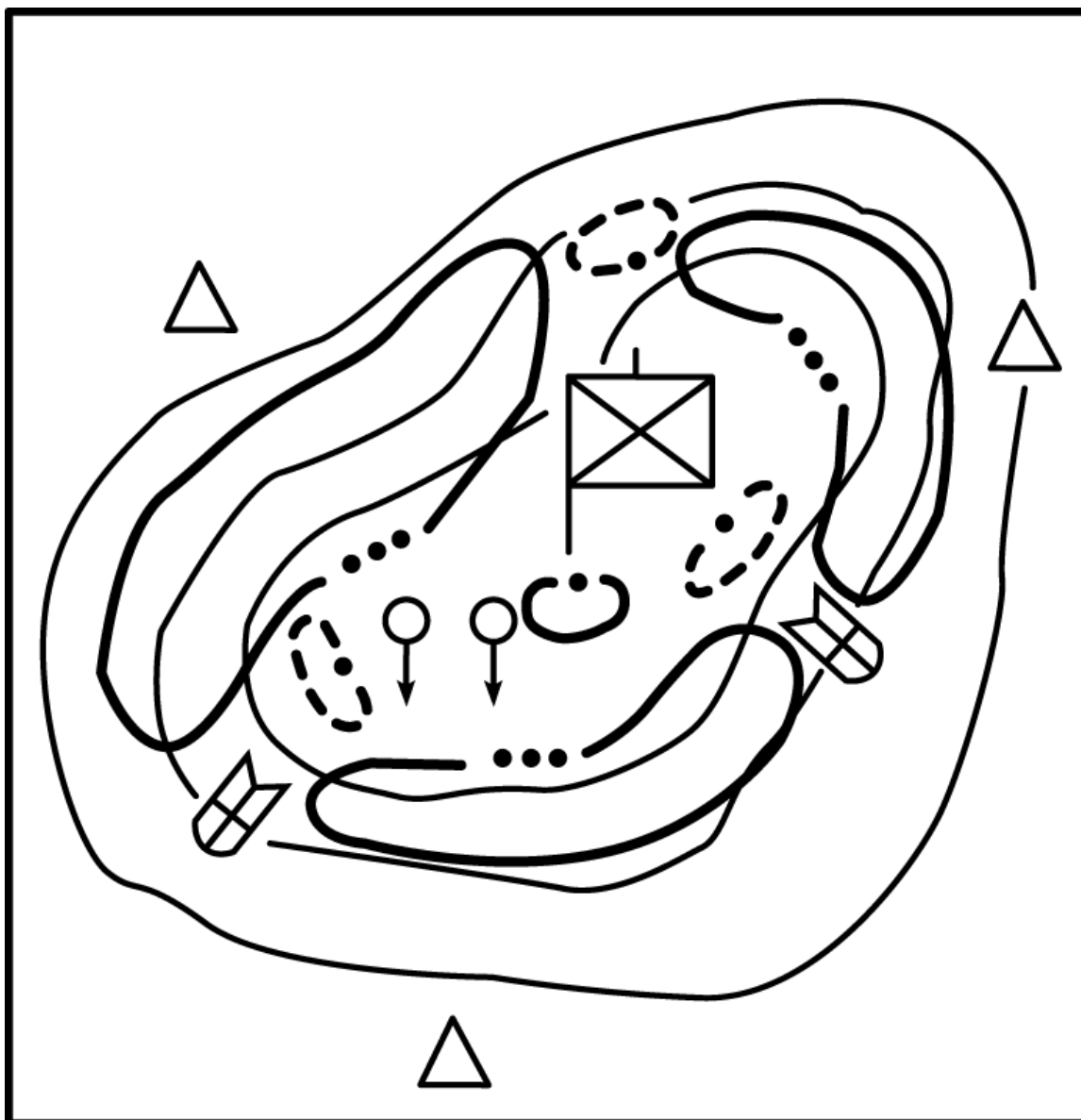


Figure 5-19. Company perimeter defense.

a. Prepare a perimeter defense as any position defense, but disperse the company in a circular configuration for all-round security; its actual shape depends on the terrain. The company must be prepared to defend in all directions.

b. The CO assigns the rifle platoon covering the most likely approach a smaller sector than the other platoons. He prepares alternate and supplementary positions within the perimeter.

c. If available, TOWs and tanks cover armor approaches. They may use hide positions and move forward to fire as the enemy appears. TOWs and tanks should be assigned several firing positions. If there are few positions for them, they are assigned a primary position and are dug in.

d. Keep the mortars near the center of the perimeter so their minimum range (70 meters) does not restrict their ability to fire in any direction. They should be dug in and

have covered ammunition storage bunkers. They communicate by phones (the wire should be buried). The FDC is dug in with overhead cover.

e. Hold at least one rifle squad in reserve. The CO assigns a primary position to the rear of the platoon, covering the most dangerous avenue of approach. It may also be assigned supplementary positions since it must be prepared to fight in all directions.

f. Prepare obstacles and mines in depth around the perimeter.

g. Plan direct and indirect fire as for any type of defense. Plan and use fire support from outside the perimeter when available.

h. Counter enemy probing attacks by area fire weapons (artillery, mortars, Claymores, and grenade launchers) to avoid revealing the location of fighting positions. If the enemy continues to advance, have the machine gunners and riflemen fire.

i. If the perimeter is penetrated, the reserve blocks the penetration and covers friendly soldiers while they move to their alternate or supplementary positions. Even though the company's counterattack ability is limited, it must strive to restore its perimeter.

j. CSS elements may support from within the perimeter or from another position. Supply and evacuation may be by air. Consider the availability of LZs and DZs (protected from enemy observation and fire) when selecting and preparing the position.

k. A variation of the perimeter defense to effectively use the terrain is the Y-shaped perimeter defense. This defense is used when the terrain, cover and concealment, or the fields of fire do not support the physical positioning of the platoons in a circular manner. The Y-shaped perimeter defense (Figure 5-20) is named this because the platoon battle positions are positioned on three different axes radiating from one central point. It is still a perimeter defense because it is effective against an attack from any direction. This defense provides all-round perimeter fires without having to position soldiers on the perimeter. It is most likely to be effective in mountainous terrain, but it also may be effective in a dense jungle environment due to limited fields of fire. All of the fundamentals of a perimeter defense previously discussed apply but some adjustments and special considerations are required.

(1) Although each platoon battle position has a primary orientation for its fires, each platoon must be prepared to reorient to mass fires into the kill zone to its rear.

(2) When there is not a most likely enemy approach identified or during limited visibility, each platoon may have half of its soldiers oriented into the kill zone to the front and half into the kill zone to the rear. Ideally, supplementary individual fighting positions are prepared to allow the soldiers to reposition when required to mass fires into one kill zone.

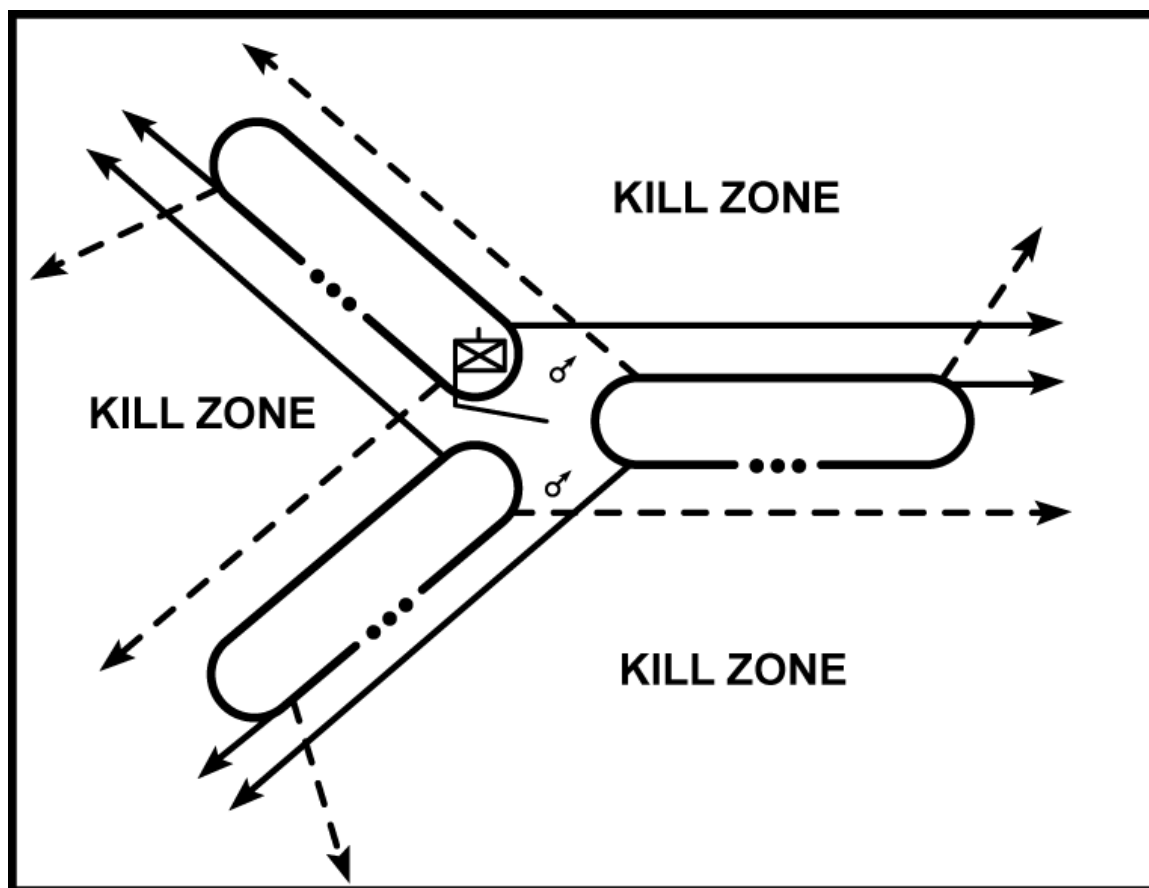


Figure 5-20. Y-shaped perimeter defense.

(3) When a most likely enemy avenue of approach is identified, the CO may adjust the normal platoon orientations to concentrate fires (Figure 5-21). This entails excepting risk in another area of the perimeter. The company security plan should compensate for this with additional OPs, patrols, or other measures.

(4) The positioning of the CP, mortars, a reserve, or any CSS assets is much more difficult due to a lack of depth within the perimeter.

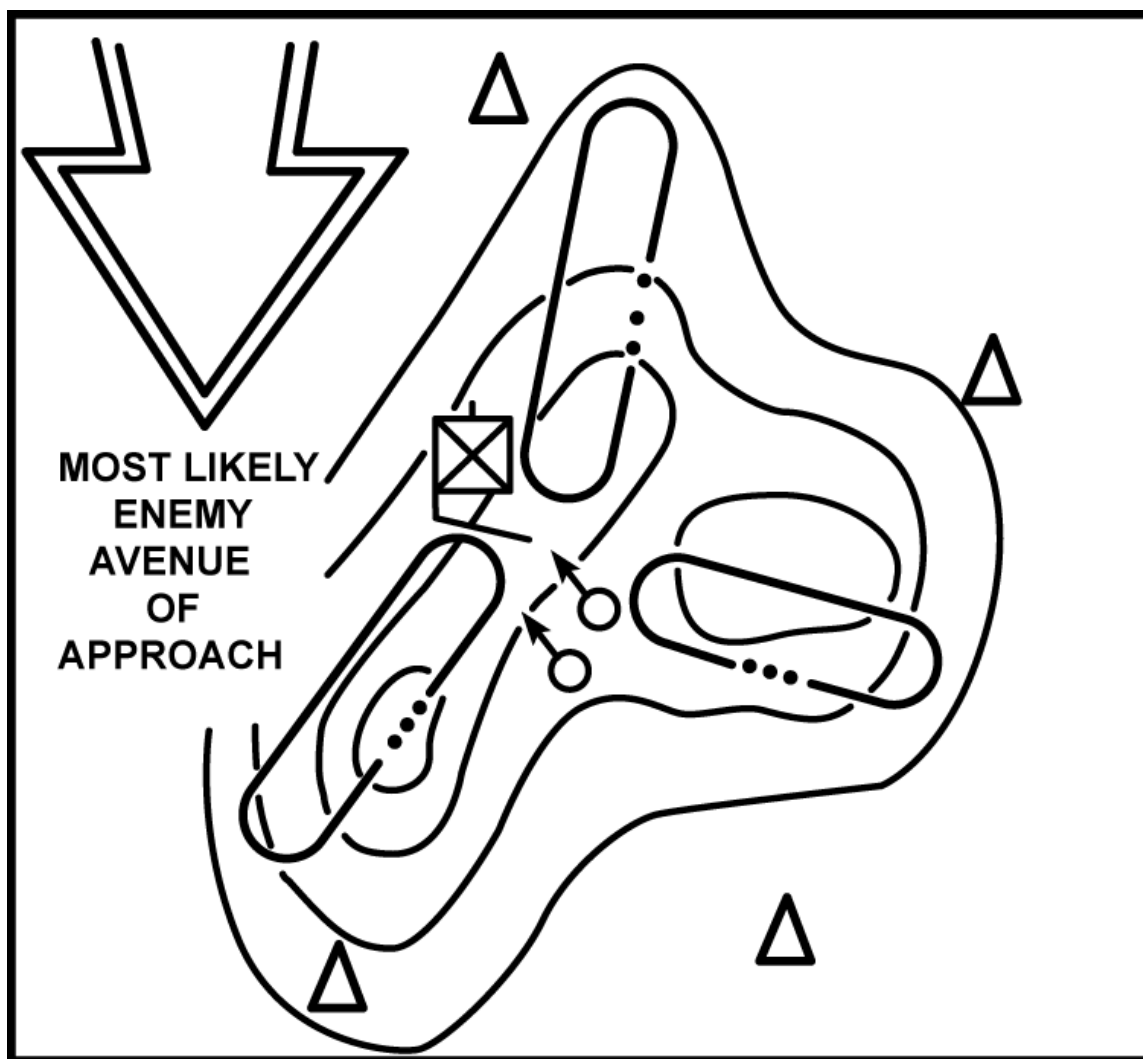


Figure 5-21. Modified Y-shaped perimeter defense.

(5) The most difficult aspect of this type defense is the fire control measures that must be established. To safely fight this defense without casualties from friendly fires, the leaders must ensure the limits of fire for each weapon do not allow fires into the adjacent platoon position. In a mountainous environment this may be simpler due to firing downward into the kill zones. Some measures to consider include:

(a) Position machine guns near the apex of the Y to allow an FPL that covers the platoon front while firing away from the adjacent platoon.

(b) Cover the areas of the kill zones closest to the apex with Claymores, other mines, or obstacles to reduce the need for direct fires in these areas.

(c) Identify those positions at most risk to friendly fires and prepare the fighting position to protect the soldier from fires in this direction.

(d) The loss of one platoon position may threaten the loss of the entire company. Plan and rehearse immediate counterattacks with a reserve or the least committed platoon to prevent this.

(e) Consider allowing the enemy to penetrate well into the kill zones and destroy him as though this was an ambush.

(f) Be aware that if this type defense is established on the prominent terrain feature and the enemy has the ability to mass fires, he may fix the company with direct fires and destroy it with massed indirect fires.

5-24. LINEAR DEFENSE

This technique allows interlocking and overlapping observation and fields of fire across the company's front (Figure 5-22). The bulk of the company's combat power is well forward. Sufficient resources must be available to provide adequate combat power across the sector to detect and stop an attack. The company relies on fighting from well-prepared mutually supporting positions. It uses a high volume of direct and indirect fires to stop the attacker. The reserve is usually small, perhaps a squad.

a. The main concern when fighting a linear defense is the lack of flexibility and the difficulty in both seizing the initiative and seeking out enemy weaknesses. When the enemy has a mobility advantage, a linear defense may be extremely risky. It is difficult to reposition forces, both laterally and in depth, to reinforce areas or to prevent a penetration. Obstacles, indirect fires, and effective contingency planning are key to this maneuvering. The company depends upon surprise, well-prepared positions, and deadly accurate fires to defeat the enemy. Therefore the company usually fights in this manner because the battalion plan requires it. The battalion then compensates for these weaknesses with other resources.

b. A linear defense may be used when defensible terrain is available in the forward portion of the company's sector or to take advantage of a major linear natural obstacle. It is also used when the enemy is mainly infantry, for conducting a security mission such as counter-infiltration, or when directed by battalion.

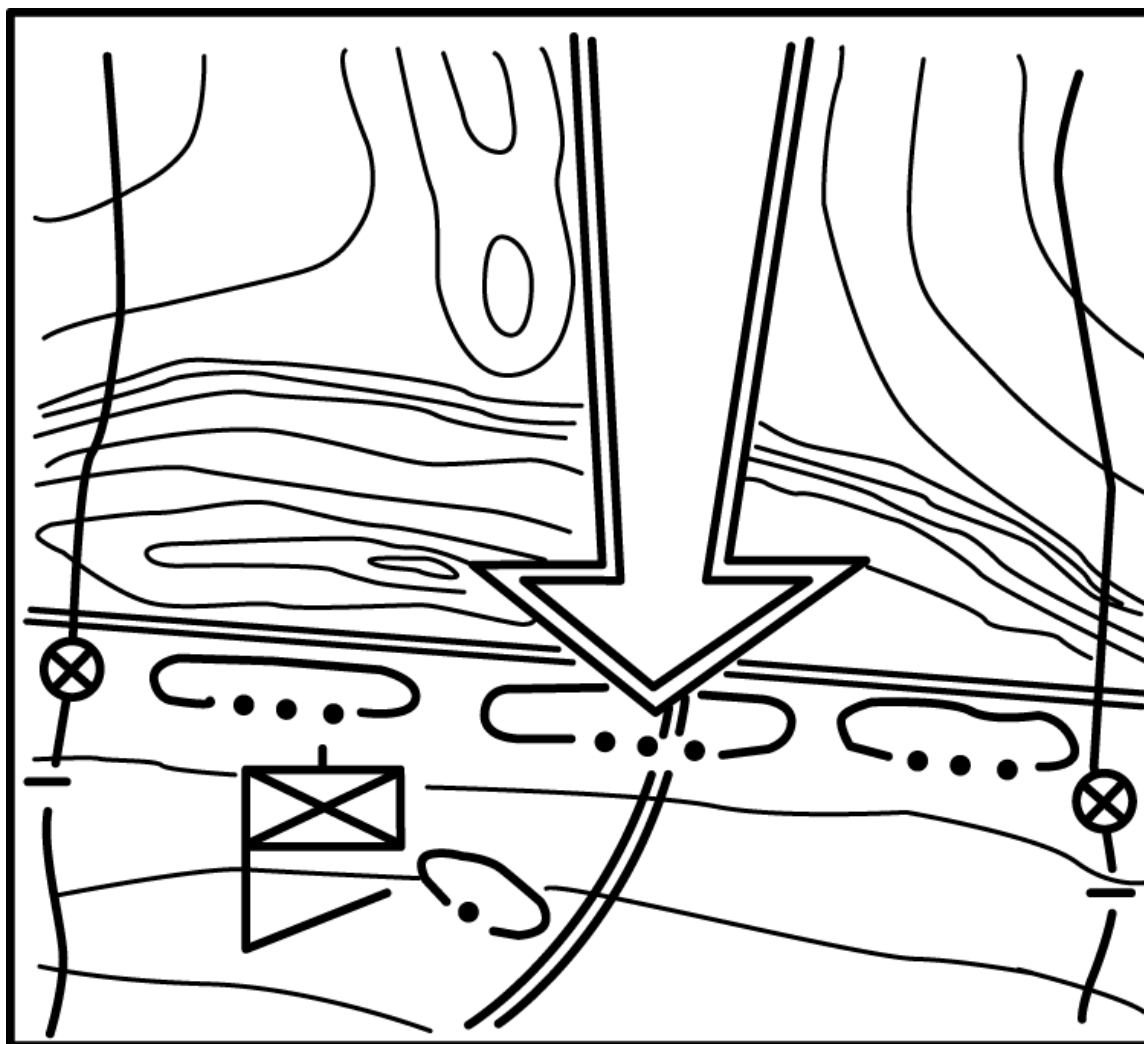


Figure 5-22. Linear defense.

c. Minefields and other obstacles are positioned and covered by fire to slow the attacker and to inflict casualties on him. Initially, engage him at long range by supporting fires (tactical air, attack helicopters, and field artillery) to disrupt the momentum of his attack. Use fires from mortars, machine guns, and small arms as he comes into range. If he penetrates the defense, block his advance with the reserve and shift fire from the forward platoons onto the enemy flanks. Then counterattack (either by the company reserve or the least committed platoon) with intense fires to destroy isolated or weakened enemy forces and regain key terrain.

d. The counterreconnaissance effort is critical when fighting a linear defense to deny the enemy the locations of the company's forward positions. If the enemy is able to locate the forward positions, he will concentrate combat power where he desires while fixing the rest of the company to prevent their maneuver to disrupt his attack. This effort may be enhanced by initially occupying and fighting from alternate positions forward of the primary positions. This will enhance the security mission and also deceive the enemy reconnaissance that may get through the security force.

5-25. DEFENSE OF A STRONGPOINT

A company may be directed to construct a strongpoint as part of a battalion defense (Figure 5-23). In order to do so, it must be augmented with engineer support, more weapons, and CSS resources. A strongpoint is defended until the unit is formally ordered out of it by the commander directing the defense.

a. The specific positioning of units in the strongpoint depends on the CO's mission analysis and estimate of the situation. The same considerations for a perimeter defense apply in addition to the following:

(1) Reinforce each individual fighting position (to include alternate and supplementary positions) to withstand small-arms fire, mortar fire, and artillery fragmentation. Stockpile food, water, ammunition, pioneer tools, and medical supplies in each fighting position.

(2) Support each individual fighting position with several others. Plan or construct covered and concealed routes between positions and along routes of supply and communication. Use these to support counterattack and maneuver within the strongpoint.

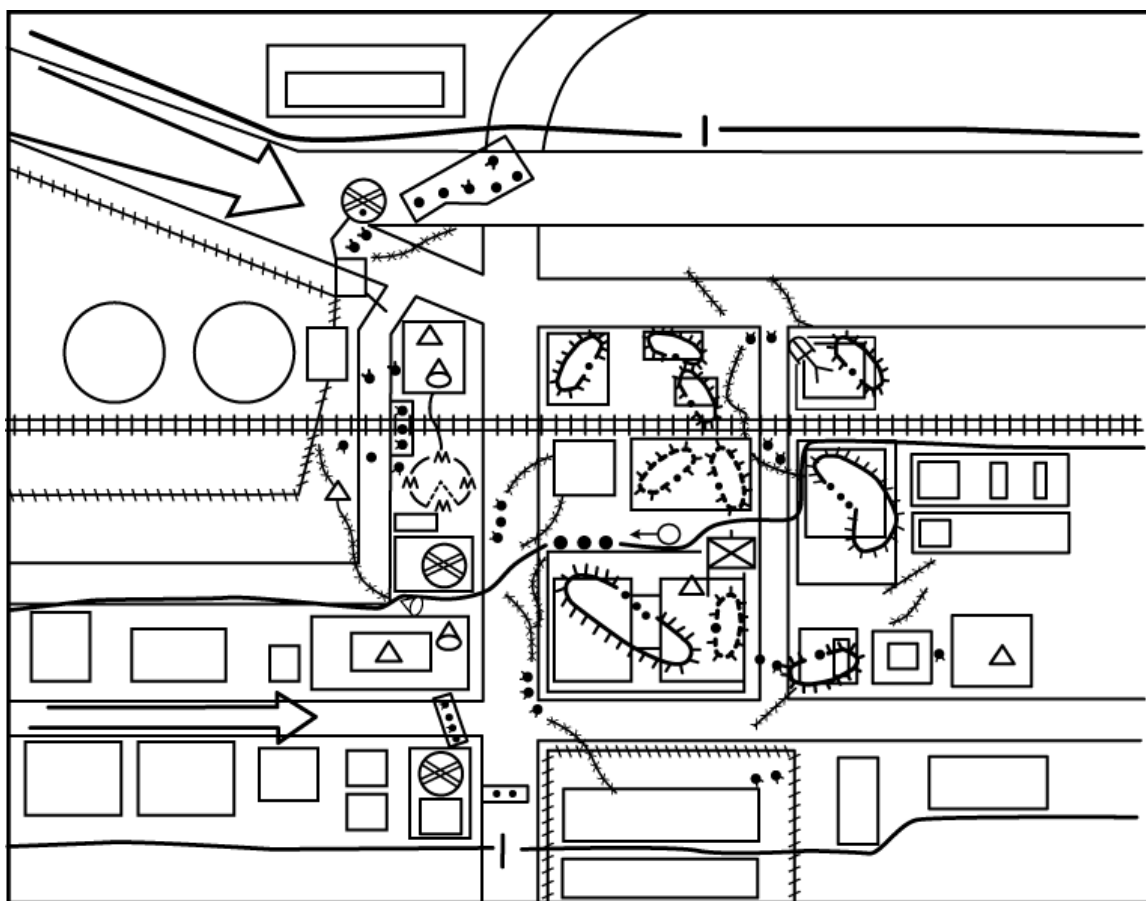


Figure 5-23. Company strongpoint.

(3) Divide the strongpoint into several independent, but mutually supporting, positions or sectors. If one of the positions or sectors must be evacuated or is overrun, limit the enemy penetration with obstacles and fires and support a counterattack.

(4) Construct obstacles and minefields to disrupt and canalize enemy formations, to reinforce fires, and to protect the strongpoint from the assault. Place the obstacles and mines out as far as friendly units can observe them, within the strongpoint, and at points in between where they will be useful.

(5) Prepare range cards for each position and confirm them by fires. Plan indirect fires in detail and register them. Indirect fires should also be planned for firing directly on the strongpoint using proximity fuses.

(6) Plan and test several means of communication within the strongpoint and to higher headquarters. These are radio, wire, messenger, pyrotechnics, and other signals.

(7) Improve or repair the strongpoint until the unit is relieved or withdrawn. More positions can be built, tunnels and trenches dug, existing positions improved or repaired, and barriers built or fixed.

b. A strongpoint may be part of any defensive plan. It may be built to protect vital units or installations, as an anchor around which more mobile units maneuver, or as part of a trap designed to destroy enemy forces that attack it.

c. The strongpoint is molded to the terrain, and natural camouflage and obstacles are used. Mountains, rivers, swamps, and forests can support formidable strongpoints, providing cover, concealment, and obstacles. Urban areas are also easily converted to strongpoints. Stone, brick, or steel buildings provide cover and concealment. Buildings, sewers, and some streets provide covered and concealed routes and can be rubble to provide obstacles. Also, telephone systems can provide communications.